

History and Philosophy of  
**Social Work**  
In India

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**SOCIAL WORK**  
IN INDIA

*A Souvenir Volume of the Silver Jubilee Celebrations of  
The Tata Institute of Social Sciences*

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## PREFACE

The Tata Institute of Social Sciences was brought into existence in 1936 and the authorities of the Institute decided to celebrate its Silver Jubilee in 1961. A Committee was appointed to consider the ways and means of celebrating the Silver Jubilee, and it was decided that one of the best ways in which to achieve the object would be to publish a volume, *History and Philosophy of Social Work in India*. It was agreed that every member of the Faculty of the institute should contribute a chapter on his or her subject of specialization. It was also agreed that for the other chapters eminent workers in the field should be invited. The result is a volume consisting of 33 chapters contributed by 32 persons. Each chapter is complete by itself but it is possible that there might be a certain amount of overlapping inevitable when different scholars write on similar subjects. The volume is meant to serve a great need in the field of social work education in India, and particular care has been taken in the selection of the subjects, so as to make them comprehensive and in the selection of writers, so as to make the volume as authoritative as possible.

My special thanks are due to the large number of men and women engaged in social work or in social work education who so readily responded to my request to contribute chapters to this book. The concept of social work has gained in depth in India especially after the introduction of the concept of Welfare State as the dominating idea in the Government of the Indian Republic. The concepts of social work and social welfare are closely inter-related and that justifies the inclusion of several chapters on social welfare which add to the value of the book.

I have to thank Allied Publishers Private Ltd. who came forward to publish the Volume and have done this at very short notice. Nor must I omit to thank Mr. S. Ramu of the Commercial Printing Press who undertook the printing of this Volume.

The duty of editing the Volume devolved on my shoulders, but unfortunately at the crucial time when my attention should have been concentrated on the Volume, I had an unfortunate accident at Baroda and I had to be in the hospital for four weeks and convalescent thereafter for nearly two months more. During this period, the brunt of the work of editing fell on the shoulders of Mr. N. Hormasji. My special thanks are due to him for the great energy and enthusiasm with which he took up this work and has discharged it. For any shortcomings I alone may be held responsible, but I trust the generosity of the readers will enable them to overlook these shortcomings.

*August, 15, 1961.*

A. R. WADIA

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# **Part One**

## **A HISTORICAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL BACKGROUND OF SOCIAL WORK**



## CHAPTER

# 1

### *Ethical and Spiritual Values in the Practice of Social work*

A. R. WADIA, HON. D.LITT., M.P.

SOCIAL WORK may claim to be a new profession with its emphasis on organized attempts at ameliorating human suffering, but it cannot get away from its original moorings in the human heart. It would be worth while tracing the growth of the concept of social work. In its broad sense every human activity has a social significance and may well be called social work. The agriculturist, the potter, the weaver, the carpenter, the sweeper are doing as much social work as the professional classes of the teachers, physicians, engineers and the clergymen. In all these crafts and professions the main motive is to earn one's bread. In them the social and the individual aspects of work are both present. But in every society there are individuals who are unable to earn their own living. They are the physically handicapped like the blind, the crippled, the deaf-mutes; and the mentally handicapped like the intellectually backward, the feeble-minded and the insane. There may be individuals economically handicapped like little children left behind as orphans, or widows, or the old and infirm who have none to look after them. In a healthy society all such people need looking after. Those who take up this work cannot make it a source of income and so any assistance that can be given by them can only be a matter of love and of honorary service. This was social work *par excellence*.

History affords splendid examples of selfless workers, dedicated to the service of suffering humanity. Criminals as a class do not inspire confidence nor evoke any desire to help them. But there

was John Howard who did not fail to see the human being even in criminals and spent his life in visiting jails and seeking to reform the criminal law as well as the jails. If today our criminal law is humane, the credit for it must mainly go to John Howard. This is equally true in connection with jail administration, for jails today are models of cleanliness, presenting a vivid contrast to the dirty and squalid chawls of our labourers, who enjoy the status of free citizens. John Howard's efforts at the reform of criminals found in Elizabeth Fry another intrepid social worker to carry on his work. She, however, added to her interest the cause of the insane, perhaps the most unfortunate specimens of *homo sapiens*. They who have lost the divinity of their reason are apt to be derided and despised, but they are worthy of all kind care and treatment that can be given to them.

Prostitutes as a class are treated with extreme contempt both by the self-righteous and their own patrons. But the self-righteous forget how much good there may be and often is in prostitutes and how more often than not they are just victims of circumstances; man's duplicity and man's heartlessness in exploiting weak femininity. They too ultimately found a friend in Josephine Butler, who sought to be their friend and reclaim them from the life of shame and squalor.

Perhaps the most famous name in the history of social work is that of Florence Nightingale. Beautiful, wealthy, educated, aristocratic, she had all the makings of a great lady of society. But something within her kept her away from all the gaiety of life and made her responsive to the cry of human suffering. Such a cry came from Crimea when during the Crimean War thousands died simply because there was none to attend to the wounded and save them. She responded to the cry and made history when with a band of intrepid nurses she left the shores of England to bring light and comfort to the tortured bodies of the wounded soldiers. The Lady with the Lamp has become a legend, an embodiment of social work in the noblest sense of the term.

India has been a land of social problems. Apart from the criminals and prostitutes, the poor and the handicapped, India has

had to face problems created by an unreasonable orthodoxy. There was the prohibition of widow remarriage, an evil all the more accentuated by the evils of infant marriages and the added risk of an early widowhood. Raja Ram Mohan Roy was the greatest Indian of the nineteenth century and set into motion waves of progressive ideas: religious, social, educational and political, which bore fruit ultimately in the independence of India. Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar took up the trail and pleaded for widow remarriage and had the satisfaction to see the passage of the Hindu Widow Remarriage Act of 1856. It was a measure far in advance of public opinion, and few widows had the courage to take advantage of it and they found the path to prostitution far easier than the path to a respectable marriage. But it encouraged reformers like Maharshi Karve to found a widow's home in Poona and he had the courage to marry a widow himself.

Behramji Malabari started a crusade against infant marriages and had the satisfaction of cultivating public opinion which resulted in the appointment of a committee under the chairmanship of Sir Moropant Joshi to report on the vogue of infant marriages. The report was a devastating document exposing the evils of infant marriages in all their nakedness, and prepared the ground for Harbilas Sarda to bring up a bill which raised the marriage age of girls to 14. It was a great step forward and though the act has not been scrupulously honoured by the masses of the orthodox, it has gone far to develop public conscience on questions relating to marriage.

Pandita Ramabai is another intrepid figure that has left her impress on the social history of India. Though a Chitpavan Brahmin of Poona she had the courage to marry a Bengali but soon became a widow. Her learning and her oratory gave a zest to her reforming spirit and when she failed to move the solid mass of Hindu orthodoxy, she was tempted to respond to the call of Christian missionaries. She became a Christian and thereby missed the chance of reforming Hinduism from within. But her towering personality and selfless work have created for her a niche in the temple of social service.



## HISTORY AND PHILOSOPHY OF SOCIAL WORK IN INDIA

A far greater personality than any in the history of India during the last hundred years, Gandhiji too felt the lure of Christianity but wisely chose to reinterpret Hinduism in the light of Christianity. His zeal to abolish untouchability became part and parcel of his great struggle to put an end to British dominance. His political struggle brought a new force to bear on social reform and there is no department of life in India today that does not bear the impress of his personality.

The pioneering efforts of Indian social reformers have roused public conscience and the horizon of the reformers is now no more confined to the social problems of the nineteenth century. It has now become wide awake to the problems of resurgent India; slums, bad housing and insanitation, grinding poverty and the low standard of life, the dignity of Indian womanhood and the cry of Indian children are now in the forefront. India is a vast country and relatively the most populated country in the world and so too the range of her problems is very extensive. Dealing with these problems is not a mere matter of a good heart and good intentions. It requires an insight into human psychology, the play of economic forces and the social trends in an industrialized social structure raising its head within an agricultural society. The U.S.A. had long ago realized the need of training social workers. This need came to be felt in the case of India as well. In 1936 under the advice of Dr. Clifford Manshardt of the American Marathi Mission, the Trustees of the Sir Dorabji Tata Trust established the Sir Dorabji Tata Graduate School of Social Work. It was modelled on the American schools of social work, but there was a characteristic difference. In the U.S.A. problems of industrial labour do not find a place in the schools of social work, for they are taken care of by the well-developed and powerful trade unions. But things were different in India. Industrial labour grew almost in a haphazard fashion. Neither the capitalist employers nor the Government were fully alive to the potentialities of labour for good or for evil and the labour movement tended to drift into the hands of professional labour leaders who were not themselves labourers. The problems of labour did loom large in 1936 and

the new Tata School inevitably under the pressure of circumstances found itself catering to the training of labour welfare officers. This field has been the main attraction for trainees in all schools of social work in India. Apart from this the field of family and child welfare work offers great scope for workers interested in tackling Indian problems almost at their source. Medical and psychiatric social work came into prominence almost from the beginning of the Tata School but the need for it has come to be widely recognized only recently. The techniques of case work and group work constitute an important part of the training of social workers. Since the achievement of independence the problems of rural and tribal welfare have come to loom large, while the problems of criminology and correctional administration have also come into prominence.

Whatever the field of social work, the main inspiration for it comes from religion. Charity is a virtue which has flourished on the soil of religion. It may have given a tinge of selfishness to acts of charity as having been inspired by the will to please God and get His goodwill for a place in heaven after death. On the other hand, we cannot lose sight of the fact that it has inspired a genuine desire to help the weak and the suffering, the oppressed and the depressed. Human heart has found its finest soil in these acts of charity. Even if they have been inspired by a desire for reward in the life to come, let us not forget the immediate good they have tended to produce.

Traditions of social work have been long embedded in the whole structure of Hindu society. The will to help society is at the basis of the concept of *Dharma*. While each individual in a caste was bound by his traditional duties there was the consciousness of the society as a whole and in the rural setting of the old Hindu society the common will to help one another reigned supreme. This was what made the *panchayat raj* a living reality. Every one had to help whether in building the village road or village tank, the village temple or the village school. In busy places of pilgrimages the need to house the visiting pilgrims led to the building of *dharmashalas*. Even today it is quite customary for

the Hindu merchant to set apart a part of his earnings as *dharmada* to help the beggar. Though the concept of social work has been there from the beginning of the history of India the concept of the social worker was not there. The structure of Hindu society was such that the caste feeling created a strong bond of kinship, and the Hindu joint family saw that its most helpless members were looked after by the family as a whole. Those who were able to work worked. Those who were ill or incapacitated became the responsibility of the family as a whole. In a society of this pattern there was no need for a social worker.

With Buddha came a great religious and social change. He was against caste, but the caste structure was so securely entrenched even in the hearts of his followers that it did not cease to be a social institution. But his missionary zeal which was responsible for starting *Sanghas* of monks and later of nuns brought into existence a class of men and women who knew no caste and by virtue of their celibacy vows had no families. They had to be supported by the laity while they in their turn were enjoined to teach them *Dharma*, and the essence of it was the preaching of the noble eight-fold path, which made the practice of charitable actions the core of life. Buddha became the very embodiment of mercy and the will to help the struggling masses had such an appeal to the heart that Buddhism became a world religion while caste ridden Hinduism confined itself to the shores of India and in later centuries even the attempt to cross the seas disqualified him as a caste Hindu. The Buddhist monk free from caste and family alike became a symbol of a free individual whose mission was to spread the gospel of Buddha and bring out its significance by concrete acts of charity.

Reviewing the philosophy of Hinduism one cannot overlook the great influence of the idea of *Karma*. Literally it means action but philosophically it has come to stand for actions, which lead to certain definite consequences in one's life. The idea of the transmigration of the soul is a basic concept in Indian philosophy and religion. As we sow in one life, we reap in another life. Thus, one's good acts in one birth lead to one's being born a Brahmin or a Kshatriya. Similarly, evil actions lead to rebirth as a Sudra or an

untouchable. Thus, the concept of *Karma* determines the whole gamut of a Hindu's life. If a person suffers from blindness or any disease, it is the result of his *Karma*. If he loses his fortune and becomes a beggar, it is because of his *Karma*. If a beggar becomes a king or a merchant prince it is because of his *Karma*. This idea has been deep-rooted in Hinduism and any reforming Hindu sect has never been able to give up its faith in this idea of *Karma* as the law governing life. It also explains the immense capacity of a Hindu to suffer. In the most trying moments of his life, loss of a wife or son, loss of money and of prestige and honour, the Hindu can say with patience: it is my *Karma*. Perhaps it is this idea which is responsible for the Hindu's tacit acceptance of every evil as it comes. If a man's *Karma* makes a man a criminal he is to be taken as a criminal. If a woman's *Karma* makes her a prostitute she has to be accepted as a prostitute. As the late Mr. Gopal Krishna Gokhale once pointed out: "We Indians lack righteous indignation." We put up with all sorts of evils, we have no will to fight them. This is the essence of Hindu *Dharma*: maintenance of caste customs as the core of Hindu *Dharma*. There is the will to suffer, to help a suffering kinsman or caste-man. But the will to help the suffering humanity at large is not a conspicuous feature of Hindu *Dharma*. Within this setting there can be no social worker, but the spirit of social work as a will to help others, especially within one's caste has always been there.

In these dynamic days of scientific discoveries, even the unchanging East has been changing. The old caste ridden orthodoxy of Hinduism has found a challenge in the teachings of Raja Ram Mohan Roy and even more in Ramakrishna Parmahansa and his dynamic pupil, Vivekanand. In Ramakrishna Mission we have a noble attempt to weld together the spiritual depth of the *Upanishads* with the Christian zest to fight evil and befriend the lowly. Rightly has this new phase in the history of hoary Hinduism been called neo-Hinduism and the Hindu social worker in the saffron robes of *Ramakrishna Mutt Swamies* has been found in all cities in India, in the U.S.A., in Paris, in Singapore, in Rangoon.

It would be no exaggeration to say that the teachings of Christ

have given a definite meaning and content to the concept of social work and have given rise to social workers in the truest sense of the term. Rising above the narrow concept of the Jews as the chosen people of God in the crudest historical genesis of the Hebrew race, Christ visualised a society where there was neither Jew nor Gentile. He emphasised the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of men. He gave a new meaning to the Kingdom of God when He preached to His followers that the "Kingdom of God is within ye." He gave a new meaning to the human individual. That is why Christ was not afraid to touch the leper and cure him of his dreadful disease. Nor was He afraid of the touch of the prostitute, for He could reclaim her by His simple injunction: go, sin no more. It was one of the Ten Commandments that the Sabbath had to be scrupulously observed as a day of rest and prayer, which made an act to help another on that day a mortal sin. It was left to Christ to declare that the Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath. To prove the dignity of work He washed the feet of His apostles. One can understand how the religion of Christ became the religion of social service. St. Paul gave a fillip to this new ideal of life when he declared to all: "Ye are all members of one another." This idea developed all the more under the stress of persecution when the Christians in their poverty had to hang together even if it be in the bowels of the earth, and the catacombs at Rome are an abiding testimony to the earnestness which marked the life of early Christians.

As in Buddhism in Christianity too, there rose the urge of men who wanted to dedicate themselves to the service of Christ through the service of men, to institute orders of monks, vowed to poverty, chastity and obedience. While it helped them to develop their religious life in its utmost rigour, these monasteries became the laboratories of social work where the hungry traveller could be housed and the fevered and the ill could be given medical aid, where the widow and the orphans could be secured help from the laity. Like the Buddhist monks the Christian monks too developed a *Wander Lust* to go to distant lands and preach the message of Christ. It has been the characteristic of Christian missions that they

have not been content to appeal to the people they wanted to convert merely by preaching to them the gospel of Christ. It was accompanied by a practical demonstration of that gospel: schools and hospitals, house to house visits to get into touch with human problems in their rawest state. If Christianity has spread today over all the continents, it is because the preaching of the Word has been accompanied by action. That is why Christianity has become the refuge of the large masses of the untouchables in India. That is why it has produced a Kagawa in Japan willing to work among lepers, even if it meant losing his own fingers, or a Ramabai in India willing to be given up by her own kith and kin so that she could serve the cause of oppressed women and raise them to their full stature.

It is this spirit that has worked through the centuries. If the marvellous achievements of science have tended to overshadow the work of religion and even made atheism and agnosticism fashionable, let us not forget that the veneer of science has not sufficed to overshadow the deep religious instincts of men all the world over. There was the case of a European official in Mysore who was proud to be an atheist and rejoiced in laughing at the superstitions of the religious. The day came when time did its work, age brought on illness and he was educated enough to realize that his end was near. As the darkness of death was creeping over him he turned to his nurse and said: "Nurse, pray for me." The divine in the man had conquered the laughing materialist and atheist. Soviet Russia has banished religion from its dictionary. Karl Marx dismissed it as the opiate of the people. Lenin sought to laugh it out in cartoons against priests, and he did not hesitate to crush religion out of existence. If a proof of its power to exist is needed there is the immortal classic *Doctor Zhivago* of Boris Pasternak. It shows how in the darkest days of the Bolshevik revolution in Russia the call of the divine could not be smothered. Perhaps it gave a new life to real religion, for forced out of churches they had to nourish their religious cravings in the sanctuary of their own hearts.

It has become fashionable to speak of the West as materialist.

but a close study goes to show how the religious soil still brings forth the finest examples of human character even in the West. In this connection there is the example of that wonderful man, Dr. Albert Schweitzer. Born in Alsace Lorraine he early displayed a remarkable musical genius. His mastery of the manufacture of organs and pianos would by itself have made him a great figure in the musical world. He studied philosophy and he can easily be looked upon as one of the greatest living philosophers of our time. He could have made and did make a mark in both these lines. But at the age of thirty he felt a new call, the call of religion not as preaching but as work. He made up his mind to become a physician and surgeon. In this line too he could have easily made a name for himself in Europe. But he yearned to work in a place where for miles there was no medical aid available. His choice fell on an obscure nook in French Africa, Lambarene. He had a feeling which the worldly would call quixotic that he must atone for the misdeeds of Europeans in Africa and so he chose as his sphere of work as difficult and remote a place as he could. It was tropical and malarial. It was far removed from any civilized place and was difficult of access. He had to start from scratch and he started work and built up a hospital primitive from Western standards, but it has become a world famous hospital and its location has become a place of pilgrimage. There the Christian doctor works. When he needs money he makes periodic tours in Europe and by his lectures and his musical performances nets big sums and returns to his work in Africa.

It is difficult to conceive that a genius of Dr. Schweitzer's dimensions should choose to work under most difficult conditions. But then he has the consciousness of working under his Master's eye, for had He not said that he who works for the lowliest works for Him? Lambarene has become a place of service where men and women willingly brave the rigours of tropical existence to help in a good and great cause. Very recently we have the example of a Hungarian aristocratic lady, beautiful, wealthy, talented who has chosen to make Lambarene a place of periodic pilgrimages where she could work. This is what we learn from an interesting work,

*All I Want is Everything* by Marion Mill Preminger. She met Dr. Schweitzer as recently as in 1950. She is proud to describe herself as "next to his dog, Dr. Schweitzer's humblest follower". The authoress was out to want everything and she had beauty, wealth, scholarship, parties galore; yet she has found everything only in Lambarene, for she finds there the genuine spirit of religion, working for the suffering. Indeed, there can be a joy in such work which cocktail parties and a perpetual round of gaiety never bring. For there is such a thing as peace that passeth understanding and that is the joy of serving God in and through man.

That such religious zeal need not be the monopoly of Christianity is abundantly shown in the life and work of Narayan Guru of Kerala. Born an untouchable he mastered Sanskrit and could quote from *Upanishads* and *Puranas* to beat the orthodox on their own ground. He saw the unity of God in man and started the movement for throwing open the Hindu temples to the untouchables, a movement which has now been ratified by free and independent India. When even Gandhiji was tempted to ask him why he should not prevent the conversion of Hindus to Christianity, like a true man of God he replied: "If they feel better by becoming Christians, that is a good thing." He realized that religion is not a matter of labels and isms, but of the realization that man is God's creature and attains the divine when he realizes the unity of men in God. Whether Narayana Guru was at all consciously influenced by Christianity or not, he too had the conviction that religion was not merely a matter of words. He had a tremendous hold on the masses in Kerala, which was for centuries caste-obsessed. He brought out the dignity of honest labour. He stood up for industrious habits, improved farming and co-operative enterprises.

So there is a move in all countries that true religion means service of man. Communism may deny religion in its official policy but in so far as it inculcates the dignity of labour and equality of men, it too breathes the spirit of religion. In a recent book, *Psychoanalysis and Religion*, Erick Fromm writes: "I understand by religion any system of thought and action shared by a group which gives the individual a frame of orientation and object of



devotion." This can cover Communism. Karl Marx has become the prophet of a new religion, fundamentally militant. It remains to be seen whether they that fight with the sword do not perish by the sword.

It is impossible not to conclude that the main, and often the only, inspiration for social work comes from the fountain springs of religion. But it requires tools and these tools are supplied by the moral experience of humanity through centuries. A man of religion is usually described as a man of virtue, and virtue is only a common name for a number of virtues. Plato had his cardinal virtues in temperance, courage, wisdom and justice. Christianity has emphasised faith, hope and charity. Any system of morality must make room for courtesy, which lubricates social life, toleration which makes for mutual understanding. Justice is the basis of all social order. The Romans were proud to say: *Fiat Justitia ruat coelum*: let justice flourish even though the heavens fall. But there is a virtue which is higher than justice, though it cannot completely replace it and that is Love. Anatole France claimed to be an atheist, but he must have been a Christian at heart to have penned the beautiful thought: "Let us be unjust, if unjust we must be, but let us love one another; the world is founded not on justice, which takes life but on love which multiplies it. Ah, how well has Christianity understood that the law of mercy is nature's real law and that the law of justice is but a dream of human arrogance."

It is these moral virtues that go to the making of a successful social worker just as much as they go to the making of a successful physician or a teacher, a lawyer or an engineer. We have the superb examples of Dr. Schweitzer as a surgeon, of Abraham Lincoln and Gandhiji as dedicated lawyers, or Dr. Visvesvarayya as an engineer. Perhaps in the humble rank of teachers we have more dedicated spirits than the world is aware of. With these professions there goes the idea that they are means of earning one's bread. But in the new profession of social workers there still hovers the halo of voluntary, honorary social service. If the circumstances today demand that social workers too have a right to be paid a decent wage, no one has a right to complain about it, for it cannot be given to all to

dedicate their lives to the service of the suffering without expecting some remuneration in return. But the very genesis of the profession of social work implies a spirit of dedication much more perhaps than in any other profession. They have their living ideals of men and women who have toiled in silence to bring a ray of sunshine into the darkened souls of thousands of human beings. This spirit of dedication must be more in a social worker, even if he makes his living by this life of service. No amount of knowledge gained by a social worker in a school of social work, not the finest techniques of case work and social work, no mere brilliance of intellect go to the making of a genuine social worker. The roots of social service are to be found in the human heart and the brilliance of human intellect has to bow to the depth and greatness of the human heart. In short, a social worker has to realize that he is a social servant *par excellence*. By the depth and intensity of his service to humanity will his worth be gauged. His work must bear the hall-mark of humility, must be the expression of his genuine love for humanity.

In the vast majority of men true love becomes possible only through the love of God, for man can become an object of love at best when he can be seen as a child of God. The divine in man is often smothered, but never totally annihilated. This is the truth which social workers in every land have discovered. Howard found that divinity in the criminals, Elizabeth Fry in the insane, Josephine Butler in the prostitutes, Florence Nightingale in the wounded and the suffering, Kagawa in the leper, Ramabai in the oppressed womanhood of India, Gandhiji in the untouchables. And so the story goes on. Who can give any common sense explanation as to why Gandhiji should have preferred to live in the *Bhangi* Colony in Delhi when the doors of Rashtrapati Bhawan would have opened at the mere touch of his little finger? Who can explain why a genius like Schweitzer should have selected a literally god-forsaken place in French Africa, when all the luxuries of European life were at his command? Who can explain why beautiful young girls should offer to serve dirty children and their ill-kempt mothers or to serve patients in hospitals with their perennial cry

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of pain ringing in their ears, or seek to befriend the insane when the whole world turns its back on them? Truly is life mysterious and so is religion. We may fail to understand it, though we analyse it, dissect it and hold up the result of our scholarship in a neat definition. But by its fruits shall ye judge it, and the whole history of humanity is the record of man's tortured soul asserting its divinity in the midst of dirt and squalor, human greed and bestiality. We may have failed to eradicate the evils of life, but still we struggle on. Truly was Browning prophetic when he wrote:

Progress, Man's distinctive mark alone,  
Not God's and not the beasts', God is, they are,  
Man partly is and wholly hopes to be.

## CHAPTER

### 2

## *Social Work in Ancient and Medieval India*

R. C. MAJUMDAR, Ph. D.

THE spirit of doing good to one's fellow beings, and initiating or taking part in activities for the welfare and common good of all seems to have been a special characteristic of Indians in ancient times. This spirit manifested itself in various ways in different spheres of life, and inspired both individuals and organized groups of men. Glimpses of all these are obtained through folk tales and legends preserved in old literary works, treatises on polity, and the *Smritis* or *Dharmasastras*.

We may begin with a story preserved in the *Jatakas* which form a part of the Buddhist canonical literature. In the garb of narrating the previous births of the Buddha, the *Jatakas* tell us familiar folk stories in which the Buddha or rather one of the numerous future Buddhas plays the part of a hero, and embodies in himself all that is good and virtuous. It is in connection with his virtuous works that we get some reference to the ideals of social work and how it was done in those days. These stories reflect the state of things in India approximately during the five hundred years that preceded the birth of Christ.

The *Kulavaka Jataka* tells us that the *Bodhisattva* or the future Buddha was born in a noble family in Magadha (South Bihar). While he was a young man he gathered round him thirty young men of the village, and induced them to do work for the public good. Here is a description of the work in which they were engaged: They used to get up early and sally forth, with razors and axes and clubs in their hands. With their clubs they used to roll out of the

way all stones that lay on four highways and other roads of the village; they cut down the trees that would strike against the axles of chariots, rough places they made smooth; they built causeways, dug water tanks and built a hall.

But they were averse to the company of women and would not let them participate in public work. The women were, however, very anxious to contribute their mite to social work for the common good. When the *Bodhisattva* and his companions employed a carpenter to construct a big public hall, the women induced him to prepare secretly a finished pinnacle before the work started. When the Hall was constructed the carpenter told the young men, "we must have a pinnacle. It can't be made out of green wood; we ought to have a pinnacle which had been cut sometime ago and fashioned." When it was reported that a woman possessed such a pinnacle, the young men approached her, but could not buy it from her for any money. "If you make me a partner in the good work," said she, "I will give it to you for nothing." They had to take the woman as a partner, and furnished the hall for the comfort and convenience of the public. "They had benches put up, and jars of water set inside, providing also a constant supply of boiled rice. Round the hall they built a wall with a gate, strewing the space inside the wall with sand and planting a row of fan-palms outside. Another woman joined them and caused a pleasance to be laid out at this spot, and not a flowering or fruit-bearing tree could be named which did not grow there. A third woman also joined them and caused a water-tank to be dug in the same place, covered over with the five kinds of lotuses, beautiful to behold." The story need not be continued. What has already been said indicates the spirit which animated both men and women to do good work for the use and enjoyment of others, and the variety and high standard of the work done.

The *Arthashastra*, ascribed to Kautilya, is one of oldest works on polity, and though its date may not be as old as the fourth or third century B. C., as many suppose, it is certainly not later than the beginning of the Christian era. It refers to the construction work for public good by the joint efforts of the villagers. It also refers

to such types of social work, as care and provision for boys, old or diseased men in case they have no sympathetic guardians or protectors. Similar care was to be taken of barren women or women with child, without any relation to look after them. It was the duty of the village elders to look after the property of the minors without any natural guardian, until they attain the age of majority, when the property should be returned to them with all the accumulated profits.

Special regulations were laid down for persons living in a city for the sake of the common good. As most of the houses in those days were built of wood or of perishable materials, caution against fire was a great necessity. Kindling of fire was strictly regulated and each man was expected to render all possible help in extinguishing fire. Some of the injunctions in this connection are very interesting and instructive:

"Vessels filled with water shall be kept in thousands in a row without confusion in big streets and near the gates.

"Any houseowner who does not run to give his help in extinguishing the fire of whatever is burning shall be fined.

"If a houseowner is not found to have ready with him five water-pots, one pitcher, a ladder, an axe, a winnowing basket, a hook, and a leather bag shall be fined."

Special care was bestowed on the cleanliness and sanitary measures. Fines were imposed on the following categories of persons: "Whoever throws dirt in the street, whoever causes mire or water to collect in the street; whoever excretes faeces in places of pilgrimage, reservoirs of water, temples, etc.; whoever throws inside the city the carcass of animals."

Punishment was also provided for causing obstruction to roads, allowing cattle to stray and damage parks or eat the grains of others. Punishment for such unsocial work may serve as object-lessons for citizens of today.

The collective charity was one of the more well-known forms of social work. It is recorded in one of the *Jatakas* that such charities were organized in the city of Sravasti (in modern U.P), one of the most famous towns in ancient India. We hear that in

this town "a family used sometimes to give alms or else the givers would form themselves into companies, or again the people of one street would club together, or the whole of the inhabitants would collect voluntary offerings and present them. Such collected charity or alms-giving was called for on occasions of famine and many stories relate how the citizens combined their resources for alleviating the distresses of their less fortunate brethren by supplying them with money, food, and clothing. Sometimes differences arose over distribution of charities, but the matter was always settled by taking votes and accepting the views of the majority.

One of the most important forms of social work was to help the progress of education and there are numerous *Jataka* stories bearing upon this topic.

One of the *Jataka* stories refers to the *Bodhisattva* as a teacher of world-wide fame with five hundred young Brahmins to teach. The people of Varanasi, where the teacher lived, "used to give day by day commons of food to poor lads and had them taught free." The same *Jataka* refers to another teacher who was paid by villagers to teach them. Subscriptions raised by the villagers to maintain a worthy teacher in the village to teach them is referred to in many *Jatakas* and seems to have been a very common practice. Another *Jataka* tells the story of a professor in Varanasi who gave instruction in science to five hundred young Brahmins. "One day he thought, 'So long as I dwell here, I meet with hindrances, and my pupils are not perfected in their studies. I will retire into a forest home on the slopes of the Himalayas and carry on my teaching there.'" He told his pupils, and, bidding them bring sesame, husked rice, oil, garments and such like, he went into the forest, and building a hut of leaves took up his abode close by the highway. His pupils too, built huts for themselves. Their kinsfolk sent rice and the like, and the natives of the country, saying, "A famous professor, they say, is living in such and such a place in the forest, and giving lessons in science", brought presents of rice, and the foresters also offered their gifts, while a certain man gave a milch cow and a calf to supply them with milk.

There is ample evidence to prove that helping the cause of

education was regarded as highly meritorious. *Vidyadana* or a gift (in the cause) of *vidya* (learning) was pronounced in the *Smritis* to be the best of all gifts, possessing a higher spiritual merit than even the gift of land. Even the poorest man gave something to eat to the hungry student begging at his door, for to turn away such a student was regarded as the gravest of sins. Such gifts were part and parcel of the Hindu religious ceremonies. Presents were usually offered only to the learned Brahmanas on the occasion of *Sraddhas*, and as these were performed every month in the ancient days, such gifts were a regular source of income to the teachers in the neighbourhood. On auspicious occasions like the *Upanayana* (initiation with sacred thread), marriage and sundry other less important domestic ceremonies, it was a custom with many families to give donations in cash or kind to both teachers and students. Sometimes, they were invited to take meals—a heavy repast on these occasions. Rich persons not only endowed schools and colleges but also contributed to the development of learning in various ways. The manuscripts of books were a great desideratum in those days, and they had copies made at their own expenses and presented them to scholars and schools. The *Puranas* have referred to this as a pious work. The epigraphic records throughout ancient and medieval periods refer to numerous grants made for education. The data supplied by them have been summed up as follows: “Very rich persons sometimes used to found free feeding houses for the poor in general and the students in particular; sometimes, they would construct college buildings either as a matter of charity or in commemoration of some departed relation. Others would often endow chairs, or make grants of land to meet some recurring expenses. This was a combination of *Vidyadana* and *Bhumidana*, and was very popular. Those who were extremely rich would often found and endow new schools and colleges or bear the lion’s share in meeting the expenses of local institutions. Sometimes village communities and trade guilds also would organize and finance educational institutions from their own resources.”

An inscription, found at Salotgi in the Bijapur District and belonging to the reign of the Rashtrakuta King Krishna III (A.D.



939-967), may serve as a typical example of the maintenance of educational institutions by local efforts. We are told that the chief of the village, joined by two hundred leading Brahmanas of the same locality, gave a large plot of land measuring 500 nivartanas "to the community of scholars of the school", and five and twelve nivartanas, respectively, for a flower garden and lights. All the lands were exempt from taxes. It was further decided that five flowers (a kind of coin?) of good metal shall be given to the community of scholars of the school by the Brahmins (twice-born) concerned when there is a marriage; half of this shall be given by the people concerned at a thread investiture; and half of this again at a rite of tonsure. When a feast for some reason has to be given here to the Brahmanas, the assembly shall feast, according to its means, the members of (this) assembly. And for the teacher in this school was granted fifty nivartanas of land exempt from taxes and one dwelling place exempt from taxes. Twenty-seven furnished dwelling houses, exempt from taxes, were also given, presumably for the residence of pupils.

Next to education, reference may be made to religion which took precedence above everything else to the people of ancient India, and, therefore, called forth the greatest devotion and sacrifice for promoting it. Kings, merchants, landlords, and various corporate organizations vied with one another, according to their means for helping the cause of religion. This took various forms, such as founding temples and monasteries, making endowments for their maintenance, construction of residences for the monks, and making permanent deposits with appropriate guilds for the supply of food, cloth, oil, and other requisites of wandering ascetics or temples and monasteries. Sometimes, wealthy merchants constructed big temples or Buddhist Chaityas (both structural and rock-cut), and a splendid example is furnished by the Karla cave. Sometimes, the temples also served as educational institutions and in many epigraphic records we find detailed lists of donations or endowments for specific items connected with both. An inscription at Managoli in the Bijapur District, belonging to the twelfth century A.D., refers to the gift made for educational and religious

purposes by several corporate bodies, namely, an association of five-hundred merchants (*Mahajanas*), the guilds of weavers, artisans, betel-sellers, and oilmen, and several other bodies whose exact nature is difficult to determine. They undertook to supply the expenses necessary for the various rites and festivals specified in the record. The most interesting part of the record is the reference to a sort of duties imposed by the donors on the sale of their goods, the proceeds of which will go to the coffers of the temple. Some also gave in kind. Thus, the fruit-sellers gave a handful of dried unripe fruit and a handful of ripe fruit on each basketful that they sold, and the basket-makers and the mat-makers gave a flower basket. Finally, we are told that the kinsmen of the village headman "gave as a perquisite of the god, five *visas* on each marriage, no matter whether of a boy or a girl, and two *balis* year by year."

Another interesting form of social work in connection with religion was the voluntary contribution made by a large number of individuals or corporate bodies from far distant places for the erection of a religious monument. The best example is furnished by the great Buddhist Stupa at Sanchi near Bhopal, on the railing round the Stupa are engraved hundreds of names as donors of that great monument. From the manner in which the names are inscribed it would appear as if every donor paid the expenses of that part of the building, such as a pillar, cross-bar, coping stone, etc., on which his name was engraved.

The facts mentioned above are more or less generally applicable to the Hindus of the Medieval period also. The Muslims who formed an important element of the population from the thirteenth or fourteenth century onwards were inspired by the same spirit of social service, particularly in the fields of religion and education. To render help to our less fortunate brethren was almost an essential feature of Islam, as is proved by the payment of *Zakat* or poor tax by every Muslim. The building of mosques, with attached schools and colleges, was regarded as a pious act as in the case of the Hindus. Some special forms of social work are illustrated by the activities of Firuz Tughluq, for we can well

imagine that the royal example was based on customary practice and followed by the subjects.

Sultan Firuz founded an establishment (*diwan-i-Khairat*) for the promotion of marriages. Many needy Mussulmans were distressed at having marriageable daughters, for whom they could provide no marriage portion. The king issued a notice that any man having a marriageable daughter might apply at the *diwan-i-Khairat* and state his case and his poverty to the officers of that establishment ... who, after due inquiry, fixed an allowance. People, small and great, flocked to the capital city from all parts of the country, and received grants for purchasing housekeeping requisites for their daughters.

Sultan Firuz Tughluq also established a hospital for the relief of the sick and afflicted, whether natives or strangers. Able physicians and doctors were appointed to superintend it, and provision was made for the supply of medicines. Medicines, food, and drinks were supplied free, and some rich and well-cultivated villages were settled to meet these expenses. The Sultan also granted allowances to learned men and the readers of the holy Quran .

One of the most remarkable social works of the Sultan was the elaborate arrangement he made for the improvement of the lot of the slaves. He collected a great number of slaves and made a liberal provision for their support. In some places they were provided for in the army, and villages were granted to them; those who were placed in cities had ample allowances, varying from 100 down to 10 *tankas*, which was the lowest amount. Some of the slaves spent their time in reading and committing to memory the holy book, others in religious studies, others in copying books. Some were placed under tradesmen and were taught mechanical arts, so that about 12,000 slaves became artisans of various kinds. The slaves were employed in all sorts of domestic duties, as water-coolers, butlers, etc., in short, there was no occupation in which the slaves were not employed. Forty thousand slaves were employed as palace-guards. Altogether there were 180,000 slaves in the whole dominion for whose maintenance and comfort the Sultan took special care. The *Amirs* and *Maliks*, i.e., the aristocracy of the

land, followed the example of the Sultan and treated the slaves like children, providing them with food and raiment, lodging them and training them, and taking every care for their wants.

This account, reproduced verbatim from the writings of a contemporary author, indicates a branch of social work, of which, unfortunately, we do not hear much in other periods.

There is abundant evidence to show that the main types of social work described above were carried on throughout the Medieval Age. Endowments for religious and educational institutions, construction of temples and mosques, and establishment of rest-houses and *dharmasalas* where travellers got free food and lodging, are referred to in records of all ages. The following account of the Punjab, written by Dr. Leitner, the first Educational Commissioner of the province, gives us an idea of the state of things at the beginning of the British period.

“Respect for learning has always been the redeeming feature of the East. To this the Punjab formed no exception. The most unscrupulous chief, the avaricious money-lender, and even the freebooter vied with the small money-lender in making peace with his conscience by founding schools and rewarding the learned. There was not a mosque, a temple or a *dharmasala* that had not a school attached to it, to which the youths flocked for religious education. There were few wealthy men who did not entertain a *Maulavi*, a *pandit* or a *guru* to teach their sons, and along with them, the sons of their friends and dependents. There was not a single villager who did not take pride in devoting a portion of his produce to a respected teacher.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>G. W. Leitner, *History of Indigenous Education in the Punjab since Annexation and in 1882* (Calcutta, 1882), p. 1.



## CHAPTER

### 3

#### *Social Work During the British Period*

CLIFFORD MANSHARDT, Ph.D.(CHICAGO);D.D.

THE first contact between India and Modern Europe occurred in 1498, when Vasco da Gama, with four tiny ships, worked his way around the Cape of Good Hope and landed at Calicut.

The Portuguese were followed by the Dutch and the British at the beginning of the seventeenth century. Since the Mughal power was firmly established at that time, the initial approach of the European powers was to secure trade licences from the government. But though they began as traders, it was not long before their thoughts began to turn to empire.

The aggressive trade activities of the Dutch and the British led to the displacement of the Portuguese and the temporary ascendancy of the Dutch. But the real interest of the Dutch was in the East Indies rather than India, and in the course of a few decades the Dutch and the British arrived at a division of their spheres of influence. The Dutch pre-empted the major portion of the East Indian trade, while the British confined their major efforts to India.

The French were the latest comers, settling in Pondicherry in 1674. Although the French never succeeded in capturing a large share of the Indian trade, their imperial ambitions clashed with those of the British. The two nations waged a vigorous struggle for supremacy in the peninsula during the last half of the eighteenth century—a struggle which was won by the British and which paved the way for the establishment of the British Empire in India.

The English were favoured in their ambitions by the break-up

of the Mughal empire and the inability of any other Indian group to step into the breach and wield effective power. The third battle of Panipat in 1761 weakened both the Marathas and the Muslims. The British took advantage of the situation to consolidate their position in the east and south.

For a period of 150 years following the death of Aurangzeb in 1707, India was the scene of internecine conflict. Nominal power rested in Delhi, but the real authority was with the local chieftains. The British adopted the already familiar tactic of taking sides in the princely struggles and succeeded in establishing their *de facto* rule over Bengal, Bihar and Orissa.

During the entire eighteenth century and even into the nineteenth, the British carefully preserved the appearance of local authority. They claimed to be simply collectors of revenue on behalf of the Mughal emperor. But certainly under Hastings (1774-1785) and Cornwallis (1786-1793) they were well on their way to becoming the effective government over large areas of territory and by 1850 they had become both in name and in fact the paramount power in India.

The outbreak of 1857 roused the British Government and people to a sense of responsibility for British rule in India and sounded the death knell of the East India Company. On November 1, 1858 the Government of India was transferred to the Crown, where it remained until the dawn of Indian independence in 1947. In 1877, the British Queen was formally proclaimed the Empress of India.

The fact that the British came to India in the first instance as traders coloured their subsequent relationships with the Indian people. A foreign invader seeking political power, must in order to maintain his position, give a measure of attention to the needs of the people. A professed trader has no such responsibility. His concern is with trade alone. The administration of the East India Company was geared to the demands of its shareholders rather than to the welfare of the Indian people. There is no denying that individual administrators within the company were men of understanding and vision, but the fundamental purpose of the Company remained unaltered.

The British who came to India as traders differed from the earlier non-European invaders in that they had no intention of settling in the country. The officers of the Company served out their terms and returned to England. India was not their home: it was a foreign country, and the British succeeded to a marked degree in insulating themselves from the Indian people.

These two factors—the underlying purpose of the East India Company and the social distance separating officers of the Company from the people slackened the pace of social reform in India for a long period of years.

The introduction of Western education had far-reaching effects on India. The Charter Act of 1813 made annual provision for the encouragement of education. Lord Bentinck carried the general policy a step further when he laid down that the type of learning to be encouraged should be Western education and that the medium of instruction should be English. From that time forward English education exerted a marked influence on the social and political life of the sub-continent.

Just as the invasion of the British differed from all previous invasions of the sub-continent, so the introduction of English education differed from all previous attempts at cultural penetration.

The earlier non-European invaders of India brought with them their religion, outlook and culture, but the foreigners never succeeded in imposing their way of life on the Indian sub-continent. As a matter of fact, the foreigners were more influenced by the Indians than the Indians by the foreigners.

The impact of Christianity and Western education produced a new kind of ferment. If in the pre-British days large numbers of the population changed their religion without a major altering of their habits, in the British period large numbers of men changed their general outlook without changing their religion. Contacts with Western life and thinking introduced a new leaven into India. As the new knowledge spread, more and more thinking Indians were introduced to a new sense of values, and felt uneasy supporting social customs which the new sense of values condemned.

Although the primary interest of the early Christian mission-



aries was in evangelical work, they were also convinced that certain reforms were necessary within the Hindu social structure. They opposed child marriage, polygamy and female infanticide. They worked for the abolition of *sati* and advocated the remarriage of Hindu widows. They sought to improve the lot of the outcastes. And they found stout allies in awakened Indians themselves.

The general policy of the East India Company was non-interference in matters of religion. Indeed, there was a body of opinion within the Company to shut out missionaries from residence in India and it was only due to the influence of Wilberforce that the British Government passed a Bill renewing the charter of the East India Company conditional upon approving the work of the missionaries. The company was forced to yield on this point in 1813, though even then missionaries were admitted with some reluctance.

Hence when Lord Bentinck as Governor-General, proposed the abolition of *sati* on the ground that "a civilized legislature might lawfully and rightfully forbid acts which violate the universal rules of morality and the ordinary feelings of humanity, even when such acts have the sanction of immemorial custom, Brahmanical tradition, and to a certain extent of ancient scriptures", there was widespread concern. Although the Serampore missionaries had made the first move against the evil, it was Ram Mohan Roy who reopened the subject in 1818, when he published his first tract against *sati*, and it was he who continued the fight until Lord Bentinck carried Regulation XVII of 1829, declaring the practice of *sati* illegal, and the persons taking part in it punishable in the criminal courts. The Regulation in the first instance was confined to Bengal, but similar acts were passed in Madras and Bombay in the following year.

In like manner, it was Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar who first drew the attention of the public to the fact that widow remarriage was in consonance with the teachings of the *Shastras* (1855), and who spearheaded the movement resulting in the passage of Act XV of 1856—the Hindu Widow Remarriage Act—in spite of the opposition of the orthodox.

Another stalwart fighter for women's rights was the Bombay Parsi, Behramji M. Malabari, who was largely instrumental in securing the enactment of the Age of Consent Act of 1891.

Although these Acts were passed by the State, it was the intelligent zeal of Indian social reformers that created an atmosphere which made such legislation possible.

To attempt a roll call of Nineteenth Century social reformers is invidious, but in addition to Ram Mohan Roy and Vidyasagar, one must also mention Sasipada Bannerji (1840-1925) in Bengal, who worked for the uplift of the depressed classes long before any such idea had taken hold in the country at large, and who not only advocated the cause of the Hindu widow, but who on the death of his first wife, married a widow as a practical example.

In Maharashtra one must recall Mahadev Govind Ranade (1842-1901), active in the cause of women's rights and in the Indian National Social Conference; his wife, Mrs. Ramabai Ranade, who together with G. K. Devadhar founded the Seva Sadan at Poona; and Pandita Ramabai, well-known for her work with Indian girls, particularly young widows.

In the south, such names as Ragunatha Rao, K. Viresalingam Pantulu and K. Natarajan come readily to mind. Natarajan later transferred his activities to Bombay, where he was for years the editor of *The Indian Social Reformer*.

In the north, Sir Syed Ahmed Khan (1817-1898) worked actively for the amelioration of conditions of his co-religionists. He founded the *Mohammadan Social Reformer* as a vehicle to express his views, and in 1875 founded the college at Aligarh which later developed into the influential Aligarh University.

But the Nineteenth Century was not simply a time of individual action and protest. It saw also the birth of movements of great vitality: the Brahmo Samaj, the Arya Samaj, the Ramakrishna Mission and the Theosophical Society. While all of these were religious movements, they were also deeply interested in social reform.

The Brahmo Samaj was established by Ram Mohan Roy in 1828 for the worship of one supreme God—"the one Brahman with-

out a second". But Ram Mohan early established from the sacred writings of the Hindus that the highest religion was quite compatible with the duties of the world. Under Ram Mohan's successors, Devendranath Tagore and Keshub Chunder Sen, the Brahmo Samaj grew both in religious and social influence—a practical demonstration that the spirit of India was not inconsistent with the spirit of the West.

Although the Arya Samaj, established by Mulshankar (Dayanand Saraswati) in 1875, represented a deliberate turning aside from Western influence and a return to the *vedas*, in an attempt to restore an earlier and simpler form of Hinduism, free from excrescences, it did not turn its back on social reform. The Arya Samaj denounced idolatry, child marriages, the ban on the remarriage of widows and favoured the abolition of untouchability and reform of the caste system.

Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa founded neither a religion nor a religious sect, but his disciple Swami Vivekanand (1862-1902) founded both an order and a mission. The Ramakrishna Mission through the years has rendered important social and humanitarian service. By giving a richer interpretation of *Karma Yoga* than that generally understood, the Ramakrishna Mission has given service the highest sanction.

The Theosophical Movement, though not founded by Indian nationals, has had considerable influence in India and has engaged in an active programme of social service from its inception.

When the Indian National Congress was founded in Bombay in 1885, its organizers felt that along with political topics, a place should be given to the discussion of social topics. Hence it was that Dewan Bahadur R. Ragunath Rao and Mahadev Govind Ranade addressed the Congress on subjects related to social reform. On second consideration, however, the organizers of the Congress felt that the Congress platform should be devoted to political topics alone. As those interested in social reform also felt the need for a platform it was decided to inaugurate a separate movement to be known as the Indian National Social Conference. The first session of the Social Conference was held in Madras in 1887.

The leading spirits in the new organization were Ranade and Ragunath Rao.

Each year when the Conference met, Ranade would give an address endeavouring to summarise the general social picture. The subjects dealt with cover a wide range: infant marriages, abolition of dowries, the position of widows, education of girls, temperance, social purity, intermarriage between castes, the improvement of the lot of the depressed classes, the regulation of endowments and charities, and Hindu-Muslim unity.

In the Conference itself there was debate regarding the relative merits of social reform through education as against direct action or legislation which might divide the body politic. Ranade believed in making haste slowly, but he supported attempts at reform through legislation.

Before the advent of the British in India, Indian village life had pretty well pursued the even tenor of its way. Caste, the joint family and the village organization protected the welfare of all, save the depressed classes, and controlled whatever the ordinary man could hope to control. But the introduction of commercial agriculture, the establishment of factories and the growth of industrial cities, and the development of modern means of transportation changed all this. Village life was disrupted; the joint family was shaken; western education, industrialization, and the introduction of modern transportation struck at caste; the factory system resulted in city slums and attendant social problems. A new India, in process of becoming, required the combined resources of both government and people.

Whereas, in the earlier days, voluntary association had been confined to specific projects, such as the digging of a village well, new conditions called for new types of organizations, such as co-operative societies, to meet new village needs.

Likewise, though the long-established position of the British Government was that government, as an alien government, should introduce as little legislation as possible conflicting with established practices and which would be difficult of enforcement, the new situation called for government intervention on many fronts: in

regulating factories, controlling working conditions and protecting women and children workers.

In the early part of the nineteenth century, social reform was linked firmly with religious change. As the century progressed and rounded into the twentieth century, men and organizations arose looking at social reforms from a liberal, intellectual and humanitarian point of view. Foremost among such organizations was the Servants of India Society, founded by Gopal Krishna Gokhale in 1905. Although the primary purpose of the Servants of India Society was political, from the beginning, it laid strong emphasis on social, economic, educational and depressed class activities and gave strong leadership in these directions.

As travel and communication between India and England increased, it was natural that social welfare organizations along the British model should find their way into India. The number of welfare institutions which bore British names is ample witness to this fact and testifies to the interest of the wives of Viceroys and Governors in social problems.

Late nineteenth century and early twentieth century social work was largely ameliorative—relief of the poor, institutions for widows and orphans, care of the blind, the deaf and the dumb, and the establishment of charitable dispensaries and hospitals. It was mainly in the twenty-five years preceding independence that prevention came to the fore. Outstanding examples of the new approach were the preventive work done in the maternal, infant and child welfare fields by the Bombay Presidency Infant Welfare Society under the able leadership of Lady Cowasji Jehangir and Sir Mangaldas Mehta, and the work for the prevention of juvenile delinquency undertaken by the Society for the Protection of Children in Western India, stimulated by Sir Rustom and Lady Masani. The awakened interest in the protection of children is reflected in the Madras Children Act of 1920, the Bengal Children Act of 1922 and the Bombay Children Act of 1924. The establishment of the Sir Dorabji Tata Graduate School of Social work (now the Tata Institute of Social Sciences) in 1936, provided both an evidence of the new social awareness and a

vehicle for translating the new ideas into action.

During the nineteenth century much of the leadership for improving the lot of women was provided by men. In 1917, two British women, Dr. Annie Besant and Mrs. Margaret Cousins were influential in establishing the women's Indian Association in Madras. This was followed in 1925 by the establishment of the National Council of Women on a national basis. The All India Women's Conference held its first session in Poona in 1927. The Independence Movement gave new impetus to the women's movement, with the result that when India became a free nation in 1947, the women of the country were well established both as the guardians of their own interests and the leaders of social advance.

The influence of Gandhi on twentieth century social problems is so well-known as to require no repetition. His programme of alternating political activity with periods of "constructive work" gave large segments of the population their first introduction to organized social activity. For Gandhi, life was integral. Political activity and social activity were but two sides of the same shield. Although Gandhi had long worked for the relief of the Harijans, his fast of 1932, probably did more to improve their lot than many years of activity. Likewise, his call to women to participate in the Civil Disobedience Movement had marked effects. Women of stature left the seclusion of their homes to bear insults and even physical injury, and in the process gained both a maturity and outlook which has manifested itself in many forms of leadership.

One of the most significant changes in the twenty-five years preceding independence was with respect to the activities of government. The British administrator of East India Company days, and even of 1900, would have found himself wholly unfamiliar with the type of programmes carried out by his counterpart in the thirties of this century.

During the cold weather season of 1936-37, The Sir Dorabji Tata Graduate School of Social Work sponsored a series of lectures on the theme, "Some Social Services of the Government of Bombay". There was considerable discussion about what should be included under social services, but ten topics were finally selected,

each of which represented an area in which government was directly concerned with the welfare of the people. The topics agreed upon were; the Public Health Programme of the Government of Bombay; the Medical Department of the Government of Bombay; the work of the Labour Office; Factory Law and its Administration; Workmen's Compensation; the Work of the Labour Officer; Industrial Housing in Bombay City; Village Improvement in the Nasik District—the Third Year; the Work of Co-operative Societies in the Bombay Presidency and the Bombay Children Act. This list of Governmental activity for the welfare of the people is a far cry from the day when government regarded its principal responsibilities as the maintenance of law and order and the collection of taxes.

In 1938, a volume was issued by H. M. Stationery Office, entitled *Social Service in India*. The book, edited by an experienced group of civil servants was prepared for the use of I. C. S. probationers. Its chapters included Agriculture; Medicine and Public Health; Education; Industrial Labour; Co-operation; and Local Government. A final chapter was devoted to Voluntary Effort and Social Welfare. The volume presented detailed information on governmental activity in the social field during the nineteen thirties and together with the Report of the Royal Commission on Agriculture (1928) and the Report of the Royal Commission on Labour (1931) provided the social worker of the period with a wealth of useful background material.

Among the official schemes of rural development one must mention the well-publicized programme conducted by Mr. F. L. Brayne, the District Officer in Gurgaon District near Delhi. During the seven years under Brayne's guidance, the experiment flourished and attracted national attention. But once Mr. Brayne's strong and stimulating leadership was withdrawn it became evident that the programme had left little permanent mark on Gurgaon itself.

The Gurgaon project points out the weaknesses of social work as it was conducted by government, even at its best. In the first instance the programmes were imposed from the top. Government officers gave their orders and expected them to be carried out. There was little feeling of community, in the best sense of the word.

Secondly, the programmes were in the nature of crash programmes. The people were not sufficiently educated as to what they were all about. When the dynamic leader left the district the programmes collapsed. Thirdly and conversely, if the government official in charge of the district "dragged his feet" the programme lagged and there was no way of bringing it to life. Hence it was that Government programmes, though often headed by able and conscientious officers, did not succeed in meeting their stated objectives and left behind little that was lasting. It is only fair to point out, however, that the political climate of the time also militated against the success of the programmes. The period 1920-1947, was a period of non-co-operation with government whether in political affairs or in social work, and without the co-operation of the people no social programme stands a chance of success.

For these reasons, voluntary efforts, such as the Rural Reconstruction Centre sponsored by the Y.M.C.A. at Martandam in Travancore, proved to have wider public acceptance than Government sponsored activities. The Martandam Centre for example was an all-inclusive rather than a departmental effort. It further endeavoured to extend itself through training—a principle also used by the Social Service League in Bombay for increasing the usefulness of volunteer urban social workers, and by the Nagpada Neighbourhood House in Bombay, in classes which were the forerunner of the Tata Graduate School.

Credit for pioneering in the industrial welfare field must go in large measure to the Social Service League, the Y.M.C.A., or the Y.W.C.A., the Nagpada Neighbourhood House in Bombay, and the Y.M.C.A programme in co-operation with the Empress Mills in Nagpur. The programmes of these institutions varied, but all were concerned with providing a richer life for the residents of congested urban areas and with seeking to remove these conditions which militated against such development.

The major problem confronting all social welfare organizations during the British period was lack of adequate funds. With agencies of all types competing with one another for the limited funds available, it was inevitable that there should be mal-distribu-



tion of financial resources, with an attendant loss in effective work.

In this connection, it is interesting to speculate what might have been the result in India had adequate funds been available for the implementation of the Butterfield Report in 1929. The Butterfield Report, though sponsored by missionary groups, contained within it the germ of the modern Point Four Programmes in so far as it concerns rural development. The emphasis was upon co-ordinated, co-operative rural effort. The idea was sound. The funds were lacking.

The picture of social work in India during the British period is that of scattered, though in the main, devoted effort. The stage was set for the new era ushered in by independence: the proper co-ordination of private and governmental agencies, with a minimum of wastage, either in effort or in resources.

## CHAPTER

### 4

# *Modern Methods in Social Work and their Adaptability in India*

HERBERT H. APTEKAR, Ph.D.

SOCIAL work, in any society, must be thought of as a social institution. As characterized by Helen Witmer, it is a social institution designed to facilitate the general functioning and to further the effectiveness of other social institutions, such as the family, the school *et. al.*<sup>1</sup> However, families, schools and other social institutions differ, sometimes quite radically, from culture to culture. They differ, at times, not so much in their outer aspect, or their objective form, as they do psychologically, that is to say, in their meaning and value for those who participate in them and make of them vital and dynamic social forces.

If the social institutions which social work is intended to promote differ from culture to culture, obviously social work itself must differ too. No profession, perhaps, is more dependent upon the social organization and composition of a society than is social work. Given a society with a large rural population and a need for education, sanitation, etc., and community development can come into being. Given a need for protection of industrial workers, and labour welfare may become a permanent part of the social work picture. Create a social situation in which adoptions are limited to relatives and there is no adoption work. On the other hand, spread legalised adoption to those who are totally unrelated to the child, and adoption becomes an important part of social work. In India there is very little foster home care and much in the way of institutional services

<sup>1</sup>Helen Leland Witmer, *Social Work—An Analysis of a Social Institution*, New York: Rinehart & Co. Inc., 1942.

for children, whereas in the United States, institutional care has become more and more limited and foster homes have been substituted. A different cultural setting with a different cultural outlook, especially with regard to the family and the functions it serves for the child, brings about such striking differences.

Social work cannot be looked upon, then, not as one and the same thing, whenever it is found, but rather must be seen as a varying and highly flexible type of social institution. This does not mean that social workers in one part of the world share nothing with social workers in another part. They have much in common, particularly in the realm of technical understanding and skill. Cultures differ, but people are people wherever they are found, and the social worker must understand them *as such*, and not just as the representatives of a particular culture. The phenomena social workers work with are not just social phenomena. They are social *and* psychological. The social worker must know his culture, but he must also know the people who comprise the culture. This means that he must know what they have in common with the people of any culture as far as their attitudes and relationships to other people are concerned. The social worker always works in a milieu of inter-personal relationships, and whether he works with individuals, families, groups or communities, there are certain universal, that is to say, psychological phenomena which he must recognize.

Take for example, the phenomenon known as "resistance". Has any social worker, anywhere, ever practised without meeting it? One might close one's eyes to it, but that will not remove the existence of "resistance" nor the necessity to deal with it, if one is to function effectively in any realm, or on any level of social work practice. Resistance is a phenomenon inherent in human relationship, just as friction is inherent in physical movement. Social work cannot be practised without it any more than an automobile, or an aeroplane, or a physical machine of any type can function without friction. The force of friction can be overcome through the application of other physical forces and resistance too can be dissipated by understanding and skill. One must

know what is resisted and why it is resisted, and one must know how to approach the resistant individual or group, if one is to function effectively as a social worker in any society.

Social work, in other words, demands a dual orientation on the part of the practitioner, an orientation, on the one hand, to practical human psychology and, on the other hand, to the active cultural forces of the society in which he works. In a society which is just being built, these forces obviously will be different from what they are in a society which has developed and clear-cut economic, social and political institutions. The former may have much more malleable forces at work, and social work may influence them to a degree which is not possible in the case of a society with a more set structure. But regardless of the degree of crystallisation of the social institutions in relation to which he must work, every social worker must be mindful of and attuned to those characteristics of human behaviour and relationship which are to be found in any and every culture. People laugh and people cry. What they laugh or cry about may vary from place to place. The social worker's concern, however, is with the fact that they laugh and cry and it will be his business to learn, in every instance, why a person, or a group, is happy or grieved.

But he must not only know why pleasure or pain results from a given set of circumstances, as the research worker might do. Over and above the inquiry into causation, he will always have a task to do in relation to causative factors or their result or both. The social work task is one of facilitation. No true social worker can be content with the possession of knowledge. His essential objective is to use knowledge in order to promote the forces of life.

The essential forces of human life exist in every culture and the social worker always has a job to do in relation to them. Children require care, and social workers everywhere play a part in providing care for children who cannot get it under normal circumstances. Moreover, they are not content with any kind of care. What they stand for is wholesome care, that is to say, care which recognizes the natural human needs, fears, problems and aspirations of children. The social worker, in other words, always

recognizes that he is working with a whole person, no matter how young or how old, and he sees this person as a being in whom there are vital forces at work, consisting of wants and wishes, fears and aggressive forces, love, hate, guilt, shame, pride, etc. These feelings and yearnings are expressed, always, in a human context, that is to say, in a context of human relationships. Human life, as we know it, exists only in relationship. This does not mean that a person can exist only in the actual physical presence of others. It rather means that relationship is as essential to one's psychological and cultural life as atmosphere is to our physical life.

Relationship thus becomes the medium of social work, which cannot take place without it. And knowledge of social relationships, consciousness of their presence and their character, combined with ability to analyse them and skill in influencing them, is the very substance of what we know as professional social work. Voluntary social work, in the sense of a comparatively simple contribution to the well-being of an individual or a group can take place without knowledge and skill in relationship. But professional social work cannot. An understanding of relationship and what to do about it are the essence and the distinguishing characteristic of professional social work. Such understanding and skill are not common property. It can be acquired only through study, not in the abstract, but in actual living situations, and incessant toil in the analysing, observing and participating in specially set up and controlled relationships of purposive character.

People at large participate in relationships without analysing them or understanding them, just as they breathe the atmosphere about them without special consciousness of its components or its character. It is normal, in fact, to participate in relationship without much awareness of it. Consciousness arises where problem is felt, in other words, where the smooth progress of socially accepted and expected relationship is blocked, in one manner or another. Husbands and wives, children and parents, employers and employees, teachers and pupils often relate to one another without difficulty and in a free and easy manner. But they also find at times that they cannot do so, and they do not know what to

do about this fact. It is under such circumstances that people seek help, and it is under such circumstances too that the social worker can function as a *social* worker. His intervention, at such a point, that is, where the development of relationship is blocked, requires all the understanding he can muster of the forces that produce blockage in relationship and all the skill he possesses in diluting or lessening their potency.

Social workers have been described sometimes as "trouble shooters" and, indeed, they are. Many social workers, however, are not content with what they see as the negative implications of such a role. Do they have no positive role to perform in the fostering of human life or the development of a society? Is their task merely that of correcting social ills? What about prevention? If so much stress is placed on relationship, and undoing what is wrong, is there any place for the preventive role of the social worker? What does relationship have to do with that? And in a rapidly developing and changing society, such as India should not social workers contribute, not only to the amelioration of social ills but to the constructive development of the society itself? Do they not have a public function to perform, and if so, can they afford such detached and meticulous attention, given to individual, and, therefore, limited relationships? Is not the scope of social work wider than this? Should not we maintain the widest possible perspective? Should not we set our sights higher?

Let us consider these important questions and let us look at whether such an emphasis on professional relationship has any relevance or any bearing upon the way these questions are to be answered. Ambitions of every profession are high ones, and the ambition to serve is in fact one of the hallmarks of a profession. Social work does not differ from other professions in this respect and may actually exceed some of them. In its very nature, social work is an *extensive* profession. There are many different areas and many different types of social work, and their boundaries are seldom emphasised. In India, particularly, every social worker today is expected to be expert in at least several different fields, and in many instances to practise them simultaneously. The emphasis, in other

words, is on the extensive rather than the intensive character of the profession. Since this is so, one might ask: Why all of this attention then to the question of relationship? Are not there other important aspects of social work as well?

In answer to such questions, we may say that in stressing relationship as the very core of social work, as it is done here, we need not minimise in any way the wider aspects of social work, or the significance of its contribution in present day Indian society. No one believes that a narrow conception of social work is appropriate or in any sense valid in India today. Nowhere in the world, it seems, is there a greater opportunity for social work to play a facilitating role in the sound development of many social institutions — schools, hospitals, factories, villages and the home itself, the nuclear institution in any society. But is the stress on relationship contradictory to, and does it really negate, the wider social functions of social work conceived of as an institution? One may not think so.

In order to reconcile these two seemingly contradictory views of social work and its place in society, let us take a look at what actually happens in social work practice. Let us begin with the widest field of all, namely, community organization. Can the community organizer function effectively without knowledge of and skill in the realm of relationship? What happens when he enters into a situation with constructive goals and socially desirable ambitions, but without knowledge of the forces of relationship which have been at work prior to his entrance into the community situations? What happens when he gives no cognizance to the unreasonable yet powerful resistance which those who are to carry out his plans perhaps keep within themselves and do not express to him? No matter how sound his plans may be theoretically, they will never be put into effect until such resistance is overcome. A *positive* relationship between the community organizer and the community itself, or at the very least, the community leadership, must be developed, and it must serve as the base or foundation upon which all else is built. Without it the finest edifice will topple. With it, the community's and the community organizer's plans will come into con-

sonance and fruition. The community organizer cannot work effectively except in a whole set of relationships, in fact, and his work when it is truly community organization will be found to take place only in a context of intricate relationships of party to party, including himself. The genuine community organizer is thus called upon to understand and to be able to develop purposive relationships to a degree that may go beyond that of other social workers,<sup>2</sup> and one which is certainly never less than what the social worker working with a single individual must possess. His capacity to diagnose and to evaluate the forces at work in a community situation should be no less, and certainly his ability to focus, develop and sustain relationships, not only with individuals or community representatives, but with those who *are* the community must be unceasingly brought into play.

Evidence of what happens when the community organizer does not have sufficient orientation to the human factor is to be found in the early experience of the community development programme. Notable as some of the achievements of the community development programme have been, many of the difficulties which the programme originally encountered were undoubtedly due to an insufficient recognition of the natural human resistance to uplift and improvement which the well trained social worker knows he can expect, and which he is prepared to handle. He knows that he can do so only in the atmosphere of sound personal and professional relationship and he would never undertake to introduce even the most desirable form of community improvement without having established such relationships in which he would deal with normal and expected resistances. The community development programme of India has gone a long way towards correcting the circumstances which led to some of its original difficulties, and the present Ministry is to be congratulated on its recognition of need for personnel, trained not only in agricultural methods, public health needs, etc., but in ways of working with human beings. Community development is social work, and it could be social work of the highest

<sup>2</sup>Cp. K. D. Gangrade, "Community Development Programme in Action," the *Indian Journal of Social Work*, XXI, 1, (June 1960).



order, if it were fully recognized that everything done within the programme calls for understanding of the more subtle aspects of human mentality and behaviour.

The field of group work is one which has already attained great importance in Indian social work, and it seems likely that in years to come, it will be found to fit in especially well with Indian social needs. As practised today, however, group work is sometimes hardly distinguished from everyday recreational activity in which one must look hard to find the social work component. Indian children and adults need many opportunities for recreational activity outside the home, and much can be done along these lines under non-professional sponsorship and guidance. There are many types of group situation, however, in which simple play opportunity is not enough. Group work and play should not be confused. Those play activities which can be carried out satisfactorily under the leadership of an intelligent lay person, or perhaps a teacher, should not be thought of as group work and should not be put in the hands of a person whose knowledge and understanding can be used more effectively in other ways.

India's need for group work, which means work with groups based upon the same kind of psychological understanding as that required for any other type of social work, is very great indeed. The Indian people are as needful of social association as any other and they welcome opportunities for group experience of all kinds. But group experience must be distinguished from crowd behaviour and wholesome group experience, particularly, seldom takes places accidentally and without control or direction. Group work is a methodical and scientific way of providing group experience designed to have wholesome and constructive results for those who participate in it. By this we mean that the experience of the group is subjected to rigorous diagnosis and analysis. It is watched from beginning to end, its meaning for individual participants and for the group as a whole is discovered and tested. The interaction of members of the group with one another and with the group leader is observed, and where necessary or desirable, interpreted. Movement of the group or individuals in it, with respect to goals or purposes, is followed,

facilitated and encouraged. Blocks to the attainment of desirable objectives, in the form of competitive relationships, self-centred and non-co-operative attitudes, etc., are recognized and treated much as they might be in case work with the individual, and positive bonds are strengthened and encouraged.

When group work is carried out in this manner, the highest degree of skill in professional relationship is required. Personal maturity and discipline which goes far beyond that demanded of the average individual must be brought into play. A philosophy of liberation of constructive and creative spirit is thus translated into action.

There is an educational element in group work (employed in the term, social education) but group work is not education as such. There is also a recreational element in group work, but group work also should not be identified with recreation alone. Group work must be seen as recreational, educational and *therapeutic*. Just as case work with the individual has a therapeutic purpose and requires skills of the same order as those applied in psychotherapy, so group work requires a therapeutic orientation and skills of a therapeutic nature. These factors are brought out in the terms "group therapy" and "group counselling". There is little group therapy or group counselling in India today, and much of what is thought of as group work is identified with social education and recreation. It would seem, however, that in the future group work in India might develop, as it has in other countries, with greater attention given to the need for psychological orientation and all of those factors in relationship which must be taken into consideration, and in relation to which skills have been developed in psychotherapy and case work.

Let us now turn to case work and its part in Indian social work. In the United States the field of case work developed very rapidly and took on a professional character before other fields of social work. Mary Richmond's *Social Diagnosis*, which might be considered the first truly professional contribution to social work literature, and which was devoted primarily to case work, was published in 1917, and within a few decades tremendous advances

were made. Immediately after the first world war, the common interests of psychiatry and case work were recognized and much borrowing from psychiatry, particularly in the realm of understanding of personality took place. Case work also borrowed from psychiatry in the realm of method, and much of case work practice, in family agencies and child guidance clinics, became almost indistinguishable from psychiatric practice. After some years it was recognized that perhaps more borrowing than was necessary took place and by the early forties, many case workers felt that it was time for case work as a profession to stand on its own. Efforts were then made to develop case work methods independently of psychiatry and attempts were made also to differentiate case work and counselling by social workers from psychotherapy and the practice of psychiatry.<sup>4</sup>

In India, the evolution of social work as a profession has proceeded along essentially different lines so far, and case work does not play as prominent a part in the total social work picture as it does in the United States. Social work, in fact, is looked upon more generically and it is sometimes assumed that two years of training in a school of social work should equip a person to practise as a case worker, group worker, and community organizer, as well as a teacher and administrator. Case work is sometimes regarded as one of the "techniques" of social work and not as a field requiring the most intensive type of training. It is practised, in many instances, incidentally and is not adopted as a method of choice in the attempt to ameliorate personal and social situations. There are few trained "case workers" as such in India. Instead, there are social workers who work in medical settings, child care agencies and institutions, after care agencies, etc., and whose help to the individual through referrals, through environmental arrangements and, in some instances, through interviewing, comprises the case work aspect of their job. Reliance on the interview itself is comparatively infrequent, and the interviewing methods which are used by case workers functioning as such, in other countries, are not

<sup>4</sup>Herbert H. Aptekar, *The Dynamics of Case Work & Counselling* New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1955.

given special emphasis in Indian social work training or practice today. Perhaps this is as it should be. A Westerner steeped in the use of such methods, however, is impressed with the fact that a student may be graduated from an Indian school of social work and enter what would be called a "case work agency" in the West, with less than half the training in case work methods as such, which he would receive in certain other countries. In the United States, for example, a graduating student who takes his first job in a family or child case agency has had at least 150 hours of class-room instruction in case work plus not less than 800 hours of field work devoted to case work *exclusively*. His field work is intensively supervised, generally two hours a week, and he often participates in agency seminars and conferences where his understanding of case work is further augmented. Following graduation from school, it is assumed that he will continue to learn, on the job, for at least three years before he will be a fully qualified case worker.

In India such intensive training for case work would be a luxury perhaps at this time, and may not be necessary for adequate functioning in many types of agency. It would seem, however, that the present view of case work as a "technique" which may be applied in any situation requiring individual attention, may in time change. Case work requires the fullest kind of psychological and therapeutic orientation and it also requires enormous skill in the management of relationships. People in India who need help with financial and personal problems can get it only through such knowledge and skill, and while for the time being, the number of Indian social workers who possess it and know how to apply it may be limited, that number will grow in years to come. For the time being, case work cannot have the position of importance which it has in American social work, but its importance will undoubtedly grow as Indian society feels that it is possible and desirable to provide psychological help of genuine therapeutic character for people who have social and psychological problems.

While case work plays a distinctly subordinate role in Indian social work today, it may ultimately prove to be a key to the solution of the problem of the place of social work in Indian culture.

For the problems which must be faced with respect to case work are, in respects, the problems which must be faced with regard to all of Indian social work. Take, for example, the question of specialization. Indian social work faces a real dilemma in this respect. On the one hand, social needs are so great that a veritable army of social workers equipped to meet needs of many different types is required. On the other hand, certain special and distinct forms of social work, such as labour welfare and community development, have come into being and workers are needed who have special orientation, interest and skill in working in the distinct settings where such special types of social work must be practised. The question arises, therefore, as to what type of social worker India should try to develop—specialists or general practitioners. Should people be trained to work in medical social work or child care, but not in labour welfare, or vice versa? Should they be given special training in community development, or community organization, but not in family welfare?

To some extent, the schools of social work have tried to solve this dilemma by training workers on the one hand for a speciality and on the other by orientating them, however briefly, to all the methods of social work. The present emphasis in most schools, at least, is what might be called an *extensive* one as far as method is concerned and *intensive* from the standpoint of concentration upon a particular field. The student acquires certain basic concepts and principles of case work or group work, but comparatively little intensive training. However, he is expected to acquire as much factual knowledge as possible in his subject of specialization, and in field work too, as deep an experience as the field offers.

This problem of the intensive versus the extensive is epitomised in a sense, in the realm of case work. If it is not intensive, case work training will have comparatively little value. This does not mean that every case must be handled on an intensive basis. What it means is that the worker should be prepared to carry the case on the deepest level of psychological understanding if that is what is required—otherwise, he should not be offering case work service. To practise case work with real effectiveness one should

be a specialist in it. If he is, the chances are good that his performance in specialized fields which require case work, such as medical social service, or family and child care, will be highly satisfactory. His speciality, curiously enough, is in that which is generic to a number of different fields, rather than one of the fields itself. A distinction is made in this case between knowledge *about* a field and practice in it. For the latter what is needed above all else is familiarity with the essential method or methods of the field. By specializing in a method rather than a field one is equipped to function in one field and simultaneously in others to which the method is common. Moving from family welfare to child guidance, to medical social service and so on presents no insuperable difficulty to the specialist in a generic method, but it does to the field specialist.

In India specialization according to field rather than method prevails at present, and this may be necessary for many years to come. It is interesting, however, that in a country with great basic needs there should be so few general practitioners in social work. It is interesting too that in training which is designed to be as broad as possible, there should be created a corps of specialists who face great difficulty sometimes in movement from one specialized field to another. Does this point to a need for a more generic type of training, with greater emphasis on methods and perhaps less on specialized fields? This is a question, which Indian social work educators might consider at this point.

Whatever the ultimate solution for Indian social work education might be, one thing is certain and that is that social work, regardless of the cultural circumstances in which it is practised, must face this inevitable dilemma. It must be generic and it must also be specific or specialized. A generic type of training, without specialization either in method or in field would leave trainees with little understanding of specialized agencies and the way in which they operate, and a specialized type of training, especially if it is according to field, runs the risk of insufficient preparation in methodology. The dilemma is a real one and it appears to be a universal one. It may be the part of wisdom, therefore, to try to

balance generic and specific in such a manner that the basic needs of the society are met. If there are too many specialists, and in India it appears that this may already be true for certain fields, e.g., labour welfare where graduates have difficulty in some places in getting jobs, then more generic training may be very much in order. If, on the other hand, there is a dearth of specialists then certainly more attention should be given to the development of workers who are oriented primarily to those fields where the shortage of workers is keenly felt. In any instance, however, the situation must be faced and decisions should be made by training institutions in accordance with actual need.

To a Western observer it would seem, at this point, that one of the greatest needs of Indian social work at present is for deeper understanding of the methods of case work and group work.<sup>4</sup> Given such basic understanding, skills in community organization and in social work administration can be built upon it. The basic concepts and principles of community organization and social work administration are not essentially different from those of case work and group work, and the worker who is thoroughly trained in one method will more often than not find it possible to transfer his understanding and skill to another method. As far as specialized fields are concerned, since the basic methods are common to all of them, training along methodological lines must provide for at least one of the essentials for practice in any speciality as well.

Increased attention given to the basic and generic methods might, therefore, be appropriate at this juncture, in terms of present needs. Such a shift of emphasis might lead to a new stage of development—a stage which might turn out to be quite in advance of that reached by more experienced countries. From the standpoint of organization and orientation, as well as in clarity of basic premises and values upon which the profession rests, Indian social work already has achievements to its credit which go beyond those of other countries, where more has been accomplished from a

<sup>4</sup>United Nations, *Training for Social Work, Second International Survey, 1955, et seq.* for an interesting account of the place of case work in the development of the curricula of European Schools of Social Work.

technical standpoint. Woven into the very fabric of the society, as it were, and accepted as a necessary and desirable aspect of societal functioning, Indian social work will always play a positive role in the development of Indian culture. Indian social workers will not be merely tolerated in years to come, but instead, they will be regarded as real contributors to the development of modern Indian culture. They may have some of the problems of prestige and pay experienced by social workers everywhere, but their role in social development has already been recognized by the community at large. The kind of society the Indian people want could not exist without a profession of social work. A welfare state requires welfare workers—volunteer and professional. Certainly, the corps of voluntary workers—their number, their motivation and their vitality—is impressive. It may be confusing from a terminological standpoint that every one in India wants to think of himself as a “social worker”, but, on the other hand, this very fact is an indication of the disposition of the society. How much better to work in a society where everyone wants to be a social worker than in one where nobody wants to be! India accepts social work. She wants it, and for that reason will support its development fully in years to come.

The one area in which India seems to lag behind other countries, it seems, is the area of technical understanding. This, one may believe, is due, in part at least, to the fact that case work has played such a minor role in Indian social work. Case work, as I have indicated, can never amount to much without a great deal of technical understanding. The two go hand in hand, and as case work assumes a more prominent role in Indian social work, and in training for it, technical understanding, not only of case work itself but of all related fields will increase. Trained originally as case workers, many social workers will subsequently go into community organization and administration and will carry over into these fields, the understanding of people and of relationships which represent the very essence of case work practice, and when they do so, community organization and administration will take on a rather different character. They will become more



difficult than they are, in some instances today, but they will also be more effective.

What of group work? Since skill in group work is based upon the same essential kind of psychological understanding as in case work, can we not count on contribution from this field as well as from case work? The author believes that we can. Group work in its more advanced forms will not gain much from a well developed and technically sound type of case work. This is what has occurred in the United States, and while the fact that this has been true for the United States does not mean it must be true for India, the very interest in technique which comes inevitably with the development of case work will be a wholesome and developmental influence upon group work. Group work practice is already much more extensive than case work in India and it is likely that this will continue to be so for many years to come. For this reason, it is just as important that group work should develop in technical understanding as it is that case work should do so. Once interest is shifted to the realm of technical understanding, both fields will undoubtedly benefit, and when they do other areas of Indian social work will gain from their influence.

A word should be mentioned about social work research which I have not intended to neglect. Research interest appears to be very great in India and this is true in social work as it is in other fields. As things stand today, however, there are very few social agencies which are developed enough to have their own research departments. Social work research, in fact, seems most prevalent so far, in the schools of social work, where it is taught as an essential part of the orientation of the social worker. How many students actually carry on research projects of any kind, once they become workers, would be an interesting study in itself.<sup>5</sup> Students of social work do acquire an orientation to and some appreciation of the place of research in the social work scheme of things and this certainly is desirable. As Indian social work develops, it will undoubtedly acquire more actual rather than theoretical interest in research and this, in turn will lead to

<sup>5</sup>The Delhi School of Social Work in a study of the employment of its graduates found that out of 293 persons, 12 were engaged in research.

further development of fields, agencies and techniques which have been subjected to vigorous scientific research.

In conclusion, a word may be added about the role of training institutions in Indian social work. The schools of social work in India have developed to a commendable degree in the short space of time since the founding of the Tata Institute in 1936, and they may be expected in coming years to develop more rapidly and more extensively. Certainly, the direction of development in Indian social work will be largely dependent upon their leadership. Effective leadership, however, must take into consideration the needs of the Indian people and of the agencies set up to serve them. Because of the lack of development of Indian social agencies, and the complete absence of professional personnel in many instances, it has been necessary for the schools of social work to take over as it were, and go into the business of setting up agencies, managing them and using them for training purposes. Much has been accomplished in this manner. However, the "partnership" atmosphere which should be there between schools and agencies has sometimes suffered. In fact, it does not exist in some instances, because there is no organized and independent body to serve as partner to the school. It is the author's belief that schools of social work need such agency partners. Agencies can learn from schools, but schools can also learn from agencies. Under ideal circumstances the two should keep in tune with each other, so to speak. They should maintain regular and frequent contacts, and each should see itself as serving the purposes of the other. As schools continue to place their students in agencies, and as agencies become more professional, it is to be hoped that more and more attention will be given to the partnership of schools and agencies and that efforts will be made to bring to the fore their mutual interests at all times. There should be no place for separation between school and agency. Both should recognize their joint contribution to education for Indian social work and their mutual interests in the advancement of the profession.



## Part Two

### **CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL WORK**



## CHAPTER

### 5

#### *Voluntary Social Work*

GULESTAN R. BILLIMORIA, M.A.

THE last few years have witnessed a great deal of social awakening in India. Upto that time the most prevalent notion about voluntary social work was the relief of distress or helping the handicapped, through individual or group effort. Charity, sympathy, philanthropy and a spiritual urge to help one's fellow beings in distress, were considered most valuable assets. Today, the concept has broadened and social work is undergoing far-reaching changes in response to the needs of a changing society. No longer are we concerned with seeking mere measures of relief for the economically or physically handicapped sections of the community. Social work in its broadest interpretation today is an organized attempt at helping in the rehabilitation of the individual needing assistance in his readjustment to his surroundings and his integration into society. The true social worker dreams of creating a social order, where social ills are at a discount and the conditions of life are so healthy that they will help social well-being and afford protection against social insecurity. He longs for a society, where every human being will have the opportunity to rise to his full stature and lead a rich, full and fruitful existence. Thus, he will want to concentrate his energies on meeting felt human needs, as well as devising measures that will tend to eradicate the causes which lead to the malaise and hinder progress.

What are the attributes of a voluntary social worker? He has to approach his task in a spirit of humility. The leisured society lady of bygone days, who doled out charity in a spirit of patronage

or condescension, has no place in modern social work. Nor does the social worker, true to his salt, undertake his mission with any ulterior motive of personal gain or prestige, or social recognition or for political considerations. Rather does he approach his task, in a spirit of dedication, grateful for the opportunity God has given him to contribute his mite towards ameliorating the ills of this world. Social service becomes part and parcel of his daily life so that his conscious or unconscious actions are all aimed at making the world a better place to live in.

The Social Worker's approach to his subject has also to be one of an equal, not a superior. This applies as much to the trained, professional worker as to the voluntary worker. To the beneficiary coming to him for aid, he must give patient hearing. He must not thrust his viewpoint on the muddled mind of a client groping in the dark; rather the two of them must jointly collaborate to find a solution for vexed problems. The beneficiary must be helped to help himself, so that he does not lose his self-respect or his self-confidence.

What applies to the individual social worker, applies also to voluntary welfare organizations. They must never fall into the error of making the community helpless by running centres, etc., without the active participation of the community itself. Rather must their programmes be so organized that the beneficiaries become zealous co-workers, with the result that when the organization discontinues its activities, the community itself will come forward to take over in its own interests.

The history of voluntary social service makes fascinating reading, but I shall make only a passing reference to it. Social service in one form or another, seems to have existed from the dawn of history. We see the germs of voluntary social work in the attempts made by primitive tribes to preserve their homogeneity and protect the weak in the face of a common danger. We detect traces of social insurance in the way life was regulated in old days by the village *panchayat*, as also in the joint family system which ensured protection to the old and weak members of the family. The free kitchens for the poor and famished, the

*dharmasalas* which gave refuge to the weary wayside traveller, the temples that afforded shelter to the homeless—these are all examples of voluntary social service institutions, existing from earliest times.

Apart from the philanthropic urge, religion was the fountainhead of inspiration in those early days, since most religions enjoined on their followers the obligation of giving to the needy and serving one's brothers in distress. Christian missionaries played an important role in the social life of the country venturing into fields of service which, but for them, would perhaps have remained neglected. Foundling homes and leper asylums owe a deep debt of gratitude to these devoted missionaries, who, in the words of Coleridge, served God by serving mankind.

He prayeth best who loveth best  
All things both great and small.

This religious fervour, however, gave way during the beginning of the twentieth century, to rationalistic principles. The birth of the Servants of India Society in 1905 laid the foundation of secular, social work in India. A few years later, in the father of the nation, Mahatma Gandhi, we welcomed our most sincere social worker, one who with his high ideals and practical approach, inspired hundreds of sincere and conscientious workers to follow in his footsteps with a spirit of dedication. He provided a large number of constructive social welfare programmes, designed to remove some of the evils that had crept into society. Nor was the rural population neglected. Realizing that by far the vast majority of people in India lived in the villages, their welfare was uppermost in his mind.

With the passage of time, social work in India has become more and more organized. Western Europe and America had witnessed the growth of organized social services, right from the middle of the nineteenth century, when they tried to protect society from the aftermath of industrialization. We in India are faced today with the same problems of rapid industrialization and urbanisation. Our joint family system is also breaking up. We should, therefore, profit from the lessons the West has learned the hard



way, through bitter experience, and avoid the same pitfalls. Their scientific knowledge and methods of work, that are available to us, should be made greater use of, to achieve quicker and better results.

And that brings us to the all-important question of training. The voluntary worker, however well intentioned or humanitarian in his outlook, must have some training to solve the highly complex problems that confront society today. It may not be possible for all voluntary workers regularly to attend schools of social work for scientific training but the serious minded voluntary worker must acquire some elementary knowledge and training through short term courses. When we consider that even for the scientifically trained worker, refresher courses and seminars are necessary to keep him up-to-date with the newer problems that face him day by day, how much more important are training and guidance to voluntary workers engaged in the field? This should be realized by a large number of voluntary workers who feel that since their services are honorary, they need not worry about training. They must realize that very often a wrong approach may result in more harm than good, and that they must, therefore, be ever ready to imbibe the know-how.

On the other hand, the professional, scientifically trained worker also must not take up a supercilious attitude to the voluntary worker. Humility and humanity are the keynote of all social work, voluntary or professional. In a great many of our honorary workers, we do find a high sense of duty and dedication to their self-imposed mission.

The facilities for training for social work in India are very meagre, compared to the problems that need tackling. Apart from a few schools or departments of social work, there are very few opportunities for training, for the vast army of volunteers that need at least elementary knowledge. We need expansion of the existing training at all levels, particularly in view of the far-reaching changes society is witnessing today in different fields. The time is far distant when we shall boast of specialized institutions for training in specific fields, but the existing schools must make

provision for a large number of trainees at various levels. That would be cheaper than starting new schools, though, of course, the setting up of more new schools is inevitable. Whether the national scheme for compulsory social service for youth will achieve the desired end or provide the training, future will decide, but it is high time Indian Universities interested themselves in finding ways and means to provide an outlet for the exuberant energy of youth and to direct it into fruitful channels. Youth is enthusiastic, has an urge for social work, as has been demonstrated again and again. Let the universities create a social consciousness amongst the youth to add an immeasurable force to our existing army of voluntary workers.

Social services may broadly be grouped into two divisions. State services and voluntary or private services. In the old days, voluntary service was synonymous with honorary or unpaid service, and the paid worker did not have the respect that was his due. At the present time, the term 'voluntary' is used for all organized social work, paid or unpaid, which is under private management and free from any external or State control.

While India is aiming to be a Welfare State, there are so many problems confronting it that it is next to impossible for our country to tackle them efficiently. Besides, our resources both of personnel and material are so woefully inadequate that it would be sheer foolhardiness for the Government even to attempt a solution single handed. Nor is it incumbent on a Welfare State to assume responsibility for all services. While the essential services and basic needs like food, clothing, housing as also education are certainly the responsibility of the State, there is a large number of other services, which can and should be left to voluntary agencies in a democratic state, and these have in the past rightly earned praise for their able handling of difficult situations. Of course, it stands to reason that the State must give all possible help, financial or otherwise, to such voluntary organizations. While the State plans and executes those plans for the masses, humanity has as many problems as there are individuals and we need an imposing army of social workers moved by a spiritual urge to tackle those pro-

blems. Nor can the State and voluntary agencies work in watertight compartments. To the extent that they co-operate and co-ordinate their efforts, will there be a bright future for the progress of Social Welfare in India.

Voluntary organizations continue to play an important role in the U.K., U.S.A., Canada and a few countries in Europe. As a matter of fact, in certain fields they assume the entire responsibility. They have launched out in hitherto unexplored fields. It is said that in Great Britain, voluntary effort was entirely responsible for many services, including maternity and child welfare. Similarly, voluntary organization in the U.K. and U.S.A. have initiated services and then handed them over to the State for maintenance or further extension. In their initiative and organizational ability they pose a challenge to public authorities. In India, voluntary organizations play a still more dominant role, for the State has only recently entered this field.

One noteworthy feature which is always referred to in favour of voluntary organizations is that unlike State departments, they are flexible and at liberty to experiment and try out new methods and techniques, while the State services are rigid and follow set patterns, either because the State has to deal with masses or because officials are nervous about expending public money on experimentation.

While this may be true to a large extent in advanced countries of the West, let us not forget that in India there are organizations with varying degrees of efficiency. While some progressive institutions to which we take our hats off are for ever launching out into newer avenues, there is still a very large number of voluntary organizations which work in the same old rut, regardless of the scientific advances made in the field of social work. Every effort should be made to improve the quality of such institutions. We cannot allow our meagre resources, financial or otherwise, to be wasted on inefficient service, or ill-planned programmes. At the same time, let us not forget that there are State departments taking a bold plunge into virgin fields. With better training and more people with imagination and vision manning the State departments

the time may come, though perhaps not in the foreseeable future, when this difference in approach between voluntary organizations and the State may be an episode of the past.

Meanwhile, let us not only encourage the voluntary organizations and strengthen and improve them, but also bring about greater understanding, co-operation and co-ordination. With the varying size and quality of our social welfare institutions, one realizes how difficult the task is; still an attempt, however feeble, has to be made. With extremely limited resources, Indian social services cannot afford wastage or overlapping. Not only is co-operation necessary between public authorities and voluntary agencies, but also between agencies working in the same field. For example, we have a plethora of *Balwadis* and recreating centres or sewing classes all overlapping, whereas many other needs are unmet or feebly handled in the same areas. While a Ministry of Social Welfare at the centre as well as in all the States will be ideal for co-ordinating social welfare work, which is now divided among different departments, until such time as the same is created, there should be strong departments of Social Work at the centre and in States where they do not exist. If we have an efficient and trained staff, with a sympathetic approach, to man these departments, co-ordination would be easier. Such departments would also be able to enforce better standards of work. In England and other countries there are Councils of Social Service Agencies which have contributed a great deal to bringing about a better relationship between services and the needs of the community. There are also rural community councils in England which have stimulated self-help and community effort in the rural areas. In the U.S.A. also, such councils plan co-operative programmes. The result is that agencies are better acquainted with the work of one another and learn to forget their differences and ego in working together on a particular programme.

We in India should try, with due caution, to create such councils without violating the sanctity of any organization, for one wrong move will alienate the sympathies of the organizations which are ever alert to preserve and maintain their separate identity.

The Councils of Social Welfare Agencies in Western coun-

tries are a necessary prelude to the Community Chest which is a unique system for getting funds for financing voluntary welfare organizations. No Chest can ever come into existence unless the various social organizations have agreed to work together in a spirit of co-operation and mutual help.

In India, the idea of a Community Chest has not yet caught the imagination of the people, nor does the climate seem very favourable for it at the present moment. Our voluntary agencies are still struggling individually to raise resources to meet their needs. Several of them cannot expand into newer horizons or extend their present activities for want of funds. While in the days gone by, the flow of private charity was a steady stream. At present, on account of the high cost of living, high taxation policy of a socialist state and the inevitable fear of worse times ahead, the stream of charity has dried up. Besides, there has been a steep rise in administrative costs. People have less leisure for honorary work, and paid services add to the cost. Then again, as social work gets more and more organized, the need is more keenly felt of trained workers. Also, certain services can only be entrusted to scientifically trained people. This also adds to the expenses. Sometimes mushroom associations, with influential persons supporting them, create further complications by securing donations which could have been far better utilised by organized associations.

There was a great deal of discussion on the subject of an education levy by the Bombay Municipality. If the idea could be extended, funds can be raised for social welfare by means of taxes earmarked for some specific purpose. The Central Council of Health is considering a proposal to levy a special cess to raise funds for the public health programmes. Whether the State will accept this proposal is doubtful.

Local Bodies and village *panchayats* which have been so far reluctant to use their taxation powers should now rise to the occasion and make more strenuous efforts to raise money for social welfare. The proposal is under consideration whether the States should not intervene to make some of the village taxes compulsory.

In Western countries this idea has been considerably explored.

In certain parts of Canada, for example, a small percentage is charged on all hotel bills and the amount utilised to finance certain hospitals.

In certain countries of Europe, funds for social work are derived from some kind of productive business. In Finland, women's organizations run a store and a restaurant which bring them handsome dividends for their welfare work. Similarly in Sweden, money is raised for child welfare through the sale of social service match boxes. In Japan, a few agencies engage in gainful activities to raise finances. In cases where the grants given by government or the funds raised by agencies are not enough, the "Foundation for promoting Social Work Agencies" in Japan comes forward to give long term loans at a reduced rate of interest. Similarly, in other countries also, money is raised for welfare through the management of some industry or the other.

A formidable difficulty that voluntary organizations have to face is that if a cause has an emotional appeal, funds can be raised without much effort. Thus, institutions for the handicapped are in a better position to raise finances than agencies devoted to co-ordination or research or some such abstract field. We can no longer look to the rich for large donations; rather the time has come when we must expect small donations from an ever increasing number. But first of all, the public conscience will have to be roused.

Besides, beneficiaries from any service might contribute amounts within their means for services rendered, as for example, in rural projects.

Realizing the importance of voluntary welfare organizations and the danger of their restricting needed services for want of funds, the Government of India in the Ministry of Education created the Central Social Welfare Board with its counterparts in the different States. One of the functions of this Board is to give grants-in-aid to voluntary organizations working for the welfare of women, children and the handicapped. The Board has a great responsibility and its proper functioning should bring about a great improvement in the present condition of social welfare in India.

Should voluntary organizations accept State aid? This question has often been debated. On the one hand, it is felt that if the State were wholly to finance an effort, the organization would lose its individuality and its independence. Certain institutions have, therefore, never asked for grant-in-aid. Others, however, while accepting grants, raise enough funds themselves to supplement the grant, either by way of flag day or entertainment or fancy bazaar or fete. All these methods of raising finance are already being played out and newer avenues of approach to people's pockets as well as their hearts will have to be discovered.

There are a large number of trusts whose objects are out-of-date; and the interest earned by them is not fully utilised. There may be religious trusts, the objects of which may be equally well, if not better served by the application of the Cy-pres doctrine. Government might set up a committee to examine such trusts and recommend their diversion to causes which might be in keeping with modern trends and altered situations, or the Charity Commissioner may be entrusted with this task.

Looking ahead, the State as well as voluntary Social services will have to turn their attention more and more to preventive rather than ameliorative measures. In the field of health, this is of paramount importance. We have been able to eradicate plague and, to a great extent, reduce the ravages of malaria which took toll of human lives to a very large extent. There are over two million blind among us whose eyesight could easily have been saved in 75 per cent of cases by a little forethought and preventive measures like vaccination against smallpox. Even though the evils of beggary, prostitution, juvenile delinquency and vagrancy cannot be eradicated entirely, they can certainly be controlled and reduced to sizable proportions through preventive measures. Many of these offenders are victims of social circumstances rather than inherently wicked or vicious.

It is very important that our women, particularly in rural areas, should be roused from lethargy. Women voluntary workers can play a leading role in this field. Though the Constitution of India grants women equal rights with men, though they have got adult

franchise without raising a finger or fighting for their rights, women as a whole neither appreciate nor exercise those rights, which just seem to adorn the pages of the Constitution. It is true the Welfare Extension Projects have brought some awakening amongst rural women, but for want of leadership, the progress is not as rapid as we would wish. Voluntary welfare agencies have here a virgin field in which to exercise their talents.

Let us now turn our attention to urban areas. With industrialization, we have a large influx of men from villages coming to towns to seek employment. Leaving their wives and children behind they have created many problems. But added to these are the problems of those who fail to find employment, who are strangers to city life and who find themselves lost in the grinding mill of a busy metropolis. Loneliness in the midst of a crowd is the worst kind of loneliness and becomes more galling when no sympathetic link binds the crowd to you. Our voluntary welfare workers might well turn their attention to such lone lost individuals and help their orientation into city life to save them from becoming drags on society. A few community centres might well serve the need. Provision of recreation has long been known to reduce social vices like inordinate drinking or gambling which may well be the result of frustration. Let such centres be started to neutralise loneliness.

There are also problems arising out of a change in our traditional life. The joint family system is slowly breaking up. On the other hand, longevity has increased, thanks to the improvement in health conditions and conquest of certain diseases. Our cities are overcrowded and our young folks are finding it increasingly difficult to look after their old parents or relations. This creates fresh problems for the voluntary social workers. The needs of the old have to be met. Institutionalising them would be one way out of a difficult situation, but this too has its drawbacks, apart from the financial burden on the State or the emotional upset. Even in countries of the West, longevity poses a problem because of the burden the State has to bear by way of old age pensions. We need a large array of voluntary workers to help the aged in their homes, to read to them, or write letters for them; to do their



marketing and shopping, perhaps to help them with cooking. Goodwill, sympathy and the urge to help are inherent in most human beings. Why should we not make full use of this urge to recruit workers for the benefit of mankind? During the second world war, the Women's Voluntary Service was able to enrol hundreds of volunteers who cheerfully discharged the duties assigned to them. Why should we not in peace time recruit the services of these women for help to the aged and for other such tasks? If the proper approach is made and the proper atmosphere created, we shall have precious human material to serve our end. Once these women have been induced to enter the field it will be easier to organize them particularly in towns and give them elementary training. While the Bharat Sevak Samaj has the same ideals of service, it has not yet concentrated its energies on this problem of the aged which is soon becoming acute.

All voluntary workers must guard against one pitfall in social work. In our zeal and enthusiasm, let us not lose sight of the fact that the quality and standard of our work must be preserved at all costs and not allowed to deteriorate. The State also must exercise stricter supervision over voluntary welfare organizations and prevent them from being misused by opportunists to serve their own nefarious ends.

Lastly, it must be realized by the State that while piecemeal measures serve present or pressing needs, the time has come when our administrators must turn their attention to planning comprehensive programmes and following a long range policy. We have pledged our faith to a Welfare State. A great deal of pioneering work in various fields lies ahead. Let us all rise to the occasion and with a united effort work to create, if not a Utopia, at least a Welfare State true to the culture and traditions of our country.

May the vision of Dr. Toynbee come true and the twentieth century go down in history as a century of social progress.

## CHAPTER

# 6

### *Training for Social Work*

DOROTHY MOSES

SOCIAL work is a relatively new profession but the service that it aims to give is as old as the human race itself. The forms, however, in which such services have been rendered, have depended largely on the social structure and the forms of social and economic organizations found in particular countries. They have, therefore, ranged from direct services given to direct needs of individuals in simple societies to highly organized and institutionalised forms of social welfare services to be found in the more economically advanced industrialised societies of western countries with their complex arrangements and relationships.

Owing to this varied range of social work functions, there has been some confusion and misunderstanding as to what really constitutes social work. With the awakening of social consciousness leading to an expansion of programmes for social and economic development throughout the world; the United Nations as an expression of its concern published *Training For Social Work: An International Survey*. This study was based largely on replies received on a comprehensive questionnaire that was sent by the United Nations to member governments and competent non-governmental organizations, also to the U.N. Specialized Agencies, and the other inter-governmental organizations concerned.

One of the findings of this study was that: "The field of social welfare has not settled into fixed or uniform pattern, and is, therefore, resistant to clear-cut definition. This fact is reflected in widespread confusion as to what constitutes qualified personnel or ap-

propriate training. In no country have the frontiers of social welfare or social service or social work been established beyond cavil. In no country has terminology been so standardized as to make possible the assignment or precise meaning to such terms as "social welfare", "social service", "social work", and "welfare work". In no country have all the functions of the social worker or welfare worker been unequivocally differentiated from certain functions performed by members of such closely allied professions as medicine, nursing, teaching, law or religion.

"There are a number of contributing factors here:

1. "Social welfare or social service or social work is, in each country, a dynamic activity that has grown out of, and is constantly influenced by, evolving social, economic, political and cultural trends, and—for this very reason—could require fixed meaning only at the price of failing to meet new situations. That is, the character of the services offered, the methods by which they are extended, and the persons eligible to receive them differ not only from country to country, but also from place to place and from time to time within any particular country.

2. "The term social welfare is used not only to describe certain specific activities, but is often used synonymously with the social policy to describe what, in some countries is regarded as a central responsibility of the State, i.e., the provision and maintenance of an acceptable standard of social and economic well-being for the entire population. The measures adopted to carry out this social welfare purpose of government may—and usually do—cut across the fields of health, education, labour, etc., which unavoidably makes more complex the problem of determining the activities for which social training is required."<sup>1</sup>

However, since the publication of this study and with greater opportunities for leaders in the field of social work to meet and discuss common problems, largely as a result of United Nations effort in this direction, there has been a greater striving to under-

<sup>1</sup>United Nations, *Training for Social Work: An International Survey* (E/CN. 5/196/Rev. 1, October 23, 1950) Lake Success, Sales No. 1950, IV. 11.

stand the fundamentals of the profession which has led to the conclusion that in spite of the different usages of the term social work, the welfare function, if analysed, can be reduced to a basic activity that is common to all social work practice. This can be defined as one of helping people who have been affected by social problems which have been responsible for disrupting their lives and affecting their social relationships. This helping activity may range from individual charity inspired by humanitarian motives or religious teachings to organized governmental and non-governmental action in the social field, as a result of the growing recognition of the need for a more systematic and scientific approach to the solution of social problems.

As the above concept gains in wider acceptance and as more governments engage in broad social planning for the prevention of social ills and the promotion of social well-being of their people, it is noticed that social work also begins to emerge as an accepted professional service. The countries where this has occurred on a larger scale than others and where professional social work has existed for a longer duration, its acceptance has been also reflected in its use by other professions to further their own objectives. Take, for instance, the use of social workers in medical, educational, legal and industrial settings. With this acceptance there has also been a growing awareness of the need for personnel in the social field, who are specially qualified to undertake these professional services, also the need for appropriate and adequate educational preparation for these varied and complex social work functions.

India too, in her own way, has been experiencing these various shifts in outlook in regard to what constitutes social work and what does not. There are still a large number of people in the country who believe that the only qualifications required of one who aims to be a social worker are a spirit of dedication and a love for his fellow men. Based on this criterion, it is not surprising that anyone accomplishing a good deed is called a social worker. The term has been used loosely to include the politician as well as the humble *gram sevak* or *sevika* and their widely different efforts to serve their country in their own specific fashions.

However, as India struggles, through her various plans for the development of the country, to become a modern democratic state in a short span of time, it has unleashed certain forces that are resulting in a vast network of social and economic changes, causing disruption in the old and familiar forms of living of the people in the country. Such changes would have come, no doubt, in due course, but the rapidity with which they now occur makes outdated and inadequate the age-old social and economic institutions that have served its people in such good stead throughout the centuries.

The inadequacy of her social and economic resources is more keenly felt in the towns and cities, where people have flocked largely for employment and other economic reasons. This has resulted in acuteness of social problems in these large and anonymous human concentrations and has brought home the inability of the joint family system, the caste group and other older forms of mutual aid to cope with the situation. Consequently, there has been a growing awareness of the need for new and more organized forms of social welfare services to meet the various and complex needs of these people. Awareness in regard to the need for training the new kind of social workers who are needed to man the new services that are being planned and organized both by government and voluntary agencies has also followed but much more slowly.

There is, therefore, still a general lack of understanding of what this training involves, and of the kind of knowledge and skills that should be required of those taking up social work as a career. For, in many quarters, it is still believed that the necessary understanding and 'know-how' of social work will be automatically generated if one loves his fellow-men. The realization that qualities of the head as well as the heart are the much needed ingredients for social work practice is, nevertheless, slowly gaining ground as is evident from the number of training institutions that are now springing up throughout India.

Training for social work in India is, therefore, of recent origin and is an imported concept, and may be identified in three broad categories:

- (a) training to perform a specific job within the framework of

a social welfare programme; (b) university education in the social sciences with a comparatively small amount of practical experience associated with it; and (c) professional education through an integrated course of theory and practice.

The first institution to undertake the professional training of young men and young women for social work was the Tata Institute of Social Sciences in Bombay, which was founded in 1936 by the House of Tatas.

Dr. Clifford Manshardt, an American was the founder of this institution and since the social workers trained in this institution were largely meant to work in towns and cities of India, their functions were envisaged mainly in terms of that of the western social worker, whose main responsibility was to administer through certain established methods the services that had been set up by a welfare agency, public or private. The number of social workers trained in this institution was at first limited; but adequate in relation to the demands for trained social workers in the country at that time.

Since the founding of the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, other postgraduate schools of social work have also been established, such as the Delhi School of Social Work, which was the first school to be affiliated to a University and to give an M.A. degree in Social Work. The Baroda University followed soon after, but went one step further in instituting a Faculty of Social Work. Other institutions of training mainly as university departments have followed in quick succession.

Most of these institutions aim to give professional training in social work and admit mainly postgraduate students. By and large, their curricula have been patterned after those found in the institutions of social work training in the West, especially of those in the U.S.A., since many of the teaching staff have been trained in these countries. At the same time, certain concessions have been made to the training needs of the country through the provision of courses in the social sciences, since most of the students admitted for training do not possess this background. An Attempt has also been made to provide background knowledge

of the various settings, such as legal and industrial, in which there existed a greater demand in the beginning for trained social workers in the country. Later on students were also prepared for work in health and medical care programmes also for that in rural settings, as opportunities for employment in these fields began to emerge.

Though the early years of training for social work in India tended to follow patterns set up in countries, where social work was an older profession, at the same time, there was an uneasy feeling amongst the more perceptive social work educationists in the country that all was not right with the training given. Hence some of the older schools of social work began to look on their training programmes with a more critical eye, especially with a view to finding out how they could best equip their students for some of the newer fields of social welfare being established in the country. They were especially concerned about the new nationwide rural community development programmes which were setting up their own training programmes in the belief that the existing social work training institutions created a cadre of workers, who were too urban oriented in their outlook. It was, therefore, felt by the authorities concerned that this training did not prepare the students for the hard, rigorous and pioneering work necessary for working in the rural communities that were to be served through these community development programmes.

Some of this criticism was to a certain extent true, but on the other hand it was also not very fair to the institutions of training, which after all had to train their students for work in the fields where opportunities existed for their employment afterwards. There is no doubt that if opportunities for working in rural areas had existed, these institutions would have also paid the needed attention to the training needs of those wishing to work in rural areas. In fact, this is what happened with the initiation of community development programmes in the country. These very institutions in a short space of time began to offer courses in rural social work. The Tata Institute of Social Sciences, through relevant courses offered a further specialization in Tribal Welfare. Of course, all this pre-supposed that different social settings required a different

body of knowledge and skills. Hence there had to be different and specific types of training for social workers desiring to work in specific settings.

In the meantime, the United Nations, in expression of its continued concern on the problem of assisting member governments to develop training programmes on a sound and realistic basis for their social welfare personnel, published in 1955 a second international survey on *Training for Social Work*. This survey had concentrated mainly on making a factual study of the existing situation in regard to training for social work in countries where such activity was to be found, and pointed out among other things, that: "Professional training in some countries consists of two years of study at the postgraduate level in universities or independent schools of social work. With certain outstanding exceptions, however, the development of training at this level is largely limited to countries more highly developed economically and in which social work has been established long enough to attain general recognition as a distinctive profession.

"While professional training at the postgraduate level may be a desirable long-range goal in some places, this appears neither possible nor suitable as a general pattern for social work training in all countries in the immediate future; or in fact until education beyond the secondary school stage is more widely available and the supply of qualified teaching and supervisory staff and field work facilities are more adequate. In a large number of countries where social work training has not been established at the same level as other recognized professions, or where national resources for programmes are limited, the norm for admission to training institutions is completion of a secondary school education. In these instances, it is often difficult to provide a full course of training of professional quality even at the undergraduate level, or to develop suitable facilities for field work instruction.

"With regard to the content and methods of professional education, reports from training institutions in all parts of the world reflect greater attention to evaluating training programmes in terms of educational objectives, though it is realized that much remains



to be done in this respect. Likewise, there appears to be a notable tendency to broaden the content of the curricula and to include in the basic programme a body of knowledge and skills common to all social work practice regardless of the setting. Where this scheme is being followed, training in the more specialized aspects is provided through additional courses of study and field work or is considered the responsibility of the employing agency. Nevertheless, a number of countries where no basic professional training has been established rely primarily upon specialized courses extending over various periods of time to prepare personnel for particular assignments or upon training on the job.”<sup>2</sup>

In the light of such findings, and in continuation of its efforts to find and to get agreement on a basic body of knowledge and skills which should form the core of social work training programmes regardless of the various social welfare settings and of the educational level of the trainees concerned, the United Nations convened several meetings both at the international level and at the regional levels to discuss this important subject.

The first meeting convened was held in Munich, July 28--August 1, 1956, and was the only one held at the international level. Nineteen persons representing fifteen countries and with special experience in the field of social work education in their own countries were invited to attend this meeting. Three regional seminars, one in Latin America, one in Asia and the Far East and one in Southern Europe, followed to discuss the findings of the Munich meeting and to decide which of them had universal validity and whether anything further was needed to satisfy local needs and requirements. These regional meetings were also attended by leading social work educators and social welfare administrators in the regions concerned. The first regional seminar was held in Montevideo, Uruguay, in July 1957 the second in Lahore, Pakistan in December 1957; and the third in Athens, Greece in April 1958. India was represented both at the international meeting held in

<sup>2</sup>United Nations, *Training for Social Work: Second International Survey* (E/CN. 5/305/Rev. 1, ST/SOA/25, March 30, 1955) Lake Success, Sales, No. 1955, IV. 9.

Munich and the regional seminar held in Lahore, Pakistan.

The major subjects of discussions at the Munich meeting and the regional seminars were: the basic functions of social workers, the knowledge and skill required to carry out these functions; the essential content of the curriculum to be planned for imparting the required body of knowledge and skills; the place and training of auxiliary workers and the relation between social work and community development. At the regional seminars, there were in addition discussions on problems of particular concern to them. In spite of the socio-economic and cultural differences of the countries represented at these meetings, a consensus of opinion was obtained on the basic principles of training for social work. The Third International Survey on Training for Social Work, published by the United Nations in 1959, has elaborated in great detail on the discussions held at these United Nations meetings.

At the Munich meeting it was agreed that "social workers can only be effectively trained through courses which are based on an integration of theory and practice. The three-fold aim of such courses should be to impart the necessary knowledge to develop skill in the practice of social work and to help students to incorporate the philosophy, attitudes and self-understanding essential to their function as professional workers."<sup>3</sup>

It was also agreed at this meeting that the total curriculum content should be divided into background subjects and those that dealt with the methodology of social work. These were further defined as:

#### A. BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE

- (a) Knowledge about man as a physical, emotional, intellectual, spiritual and social being.
- (b) Knowledge of society, including the economic, political, social and legal structure and the operation of public and private social welfare provision.

<sup>3</sup>United Nations, *Report of the U.N. Meeting of Experts on Social Work Training*. Munich. 28 July—1 August 1956.

B. PROFESSIONAL KNOWLEDGE

- (a) Social work theory and practice.
- (b) The process of administration.

C SKILLS

- (a) Development of ability to use certain accepted social work methods for working with individuals, groups and communities.
- (b) Administration.
- (c) Research.
- (d) Teaching.

In making these recommendations at Munich, the expert group pointed out repeatedly that their recommendations were meant mainly to serve as guide-lines leaving each country to work out the detailed contents within the general educational framework to be found in the country concerned.

At the regional seminars the above recommendations for the training of social workers were not only affirmed, but also accepted, by the representatives of the different countries present at these meetings. At the same time, there was a general feeling that to provide theoretical knowledge was easy in comparison to the difficulties encountered in providing field work training for the development of skills by social work students. Even in the matter of theory there was a feeling that too much of the body of knowledge involved, because it had been developed in western countries, was characteristic of the needs and problems pertaining to such societies. Schools of social work in countries where the profession was newly emerging, doubtless, borrowed heavily from such teaching materials, in spite of the frequent unrealistic nature of such content. It was felt that until such knowledge was adapted to local conditions or new literature was developed, reflecting the peculiar character of their own social problems and the types of existing social and economic resources to cope with these problems, they would have to continue to rely on social work literature from abroad.

Lack of field work facilities for the training of students appeared to be a very severe and bigger handicap in countries where

training for social work was either new or recently developed. It was felt that without opportunity for field work application of class-room theory, social work training could not achieve its real purpose which was to prepare people for a practical profession.

Much of the difficulties in field work training lay in finding an adequate number of social welfare agencies which employed trained social workers, so that standards of practice were ensured and of a quality that could be used for teaching new entrants to the profession. In most of the countries concerned, most social welfare programmes had been set up and entrusted to social workers who were untrained and who were, therefore, accustomed to the rule of thumb methods rather than a scientific approach. This often resulted in questionable performance, in spite of the goodwill that lay behind the services given. Being untrained, it was understandable if such workers did not appreciate the purpose of field work in training, also the theory underlying social work practice. In such circumstances, the trainers were hard put, not only in finding good social welfare agencies, but also in finding good field work supervisors through whom the much needed practical training could be provided.

All the problems raised and discussed at these United Nations meetings will, no doubt, have a familiar ring for many social work educators in India. For they too, have had to struggle considerably to establish standards of practice as well as of that in training. It is, therefore, hoped that current thinking on the content of training for social work as specifically expressed at these United Nations meetings will now have some impact on the thinking of all social work educators in India, leading to the much needed reformulation of policies of their respective training programmes.

In this connection, several questions may be raised, one of the chief being whether there has ever been any attempt to assess the number and categories of social workers required in the country. It would appear from existing facts that more often than not social work training institutions and training programmes in India have been set up on an *ad hoc* basis without any initial inquiry as to whether there was any need for additional training

programmes and institutions also as to who should be trained and for what, as well as the important one of who would use the products of such institutions.

As a consequence, India has at the present time a large number of training programmes located in all parts of the country. Except for few well-established postgraduate institutions, by and large, the training programmes are of various educational levels and have a variety of standards. Some of them have been instituted by government departments and ministries, such as the Labour Department and the Ministry of Community Development, and some by universities or private bodies interested in the professional education of social workers. Often these programmes function on their own without any exchange of information or experience, though the Ministry of Education in New Delhi has been attempting recently to get them together.

To the uninitiated employer confronted by social workers of such varied training and varied backgrounds and all applying for the same posts, differences due to the kind of training received is not much appreciated because they do not understand at present why one kind of training is superior to the other. Consequently, they either accept what they get because they know no better or having tested the product of their choice they have a poor opinion of trained social workers in general if the person they have appointed fails them because he has been ill-prepared for his professional responsibilities. This dissatisfaction has often led to many of the employing agencies instituting training programmes of their own, based on the kinds of functions the worker is expected to perform in a particular agency. All this well-intentioned and multiplicity of effort in training for social work has not only failed to achieve the true purpose behind these activities but has also resulted in a great wastage of scarce resources.

Such a varied and somewhat confused situation would, therefore, make it desirable that India should also take stock of her training resources on a national basis as the United Nations has done on a global basis. This would seem imperative if standards of social work practice in India are to improve, so that the people

who are supposed to benefit by the various social welfare services to be found in the country get the best possible service available. The great dearth of properly trained and qualified social work personnel in the country would also necessitate speedy action in this respect, in order that they be used to the maximum advantage and in the most strategic social work positions.

It may also be appropriately asked at this time whether all social work functions in India require the same comprehensive preparation, or whether certain specific and more routine functions cannot be performed by workers with less intensive training. We may ask also, which kind of social work functions require greater preparation and which could be carried out with less. Analysis of these different functions should then be made in order to find out the knowledge and skills required of all the different categories and levels of social workers so defined.

As mentioned earlier, the consensus of opinion obtained at the meetings convened by the United Nations was that all social workers, in order to carry out their responsibilities effectively, should have an understanding of the people they served and the society in which they lived, also certain basic skills for working with people. If there is agreement amongst social work educators in India also on this recommendation, then it may be necessary to systematise the assorted knowledge that is now being given by training institutions to students of social work in India, also to adapt it so that the theory underlying social work practice has a meaning for all levels of social workers undergoing training. Only through this means will it be possible for all social workers, however important or limited and humble their responsibilities, to understand the human material with which they are working, also to possess the basic social work skills necessary for helping people in need. A clearer understanding by the public, of the aims and objectives of social work and of the various levels of workers needed, should also help greatly in achieving the desired ends of the many social welfare programmes that are now to be found in the country. With the expected raising of standards of practice at all levels through carefully thought out and carefully planned training

programmes, there should also be a greater and more economical use of the more fully trained and qualified social work personnel in more responsible jobs that would make use of their greater skills and more comprehensive background.

It may also be expected that with a clearer understanding of the various types of training needed in the country, there should be a more rational use of existing training resources, so that everyone would not be attempting to do the same thing. The post-graduate institutions offering professional training would have to come to some understanding and agreement on their common objectives and as to where professionally trained social workers could best be employed. The other training programmes having more limited content and duration would also understand their limitations and prepare people for more specific functions. Employing agencies too might learn in time to select and use their workers with greater discrimination. Thus, by strengthening existing training programmes and by ensuring basic standards in the new ones being established, it is hoped that the existing training resources in the country may eventually be used to their maximum effectiveness.

The important role of research for the scientific testing of current social work concepts and the evaluation of existing methods of practice should also receive due consideration in any review that may be undertaken of social work training programmes in India. Lack of teaching materials which reflects the peculiar nature and character of social problems found in many of the countries concerned has been mentioned earlier. A more scientific study of local problems with a view to developing local literature would then also appear imperative at this time.

Since facilities for social research are very limited and even non-existent in many countries including India, it has placed heavy responsibilities on institutions of social work training to collect the basic social data required. Indirectly, this has been of much benefit to the social workers concerned, since it is necessary that a research attitude should be fostered in all social workers, so that they develop an 'orderly process of thought and study'. For,

the competence of a professional social worker will ultimately depend much on his competence as a research worker in social work.

Since most of the well-established institutions of training in India are already giving courses in social research to train their students in this field, it is hoped that the increasing number of research studies undertaken by their students as a part of their training will eventually make some contribution to the other efforts being made in the country for overcoming the present lack of reliable literature and statistics on social facts about the country.

Again, with the rapid increase of government intervention in India for meeting the social needs of her people, there has been an increasing recognition of the part that social workers might play in social development. Many of them have already been invited to contribute to social planning and administration and it may well be that many more social workers will be used at all levels of national planning in this respect.

Therefore, as more and more social workers of ability participate in these national plans for the development of their country, it is hoped that in time social work will also take its place with the other professions, such as health, education, law and even economists in forming and executing social and economic policy. Such activities would, therefore, also have important implications regarding the appropriate educational background necessary for social workers to enable them to co-operate and give leadership in such matters when called upon by the country to do so.





## CHAPTER

# 7

## Social Legislation

M. J. SETHNA, Ph.D., BAR-AT-LAW

WHAT is social legislation? It may well be pointed out that all legislation is, in the broad sense, social in character. Law, as understood today, particularly when we have welfare states, is not just a command issued to people in subjectivity, but is an instrument of welfare. Law is a means to an end, that end being the greatest good of the largest number in the society concerned. Law is subservient to the needs of men, and is, or should be, at the service of men. It cannot, and should not, be a master over men, or an end in itself. Law is dependent on the *common will which is associated with the common good*. Hence, it may be perceived that law is an instrument of social service and utility.

Though all law is, in the wide sense, social in nature, yet there are laws which are *particularly* or *specifically* social in character. The Indian Penal Code is meant to serve society, and exists for the purpose of maintaining peace and order, so that men may live and let live. The Contract Act gives us the principles relating to agreements which are enforceable at law, and provides us with all the pros and cons relating to the 'what' and the 'why' of contracts. Today, we are living not in an age of status but in an age of free-will and choice. Today, it is not an age of superstition or belief when men could not argue, but had to wonder, accept and obey the customs and folk-lore; today, we are living in an age of reason and free-will. Reason dominates, or should dominate, the desires of men and regulate them in proper channel. At the

same time, reason gives men the proud possession of his free-choice. It is an age of contracts, and most of our legal rights are created by contracts. As Sir Henry Maine has pointed out, there is a shifting over from status to free-will. So the law of contracts also serves humanity, and is, in that sense, a social law, but when we talk of social legislation, in the strict sense, we contemplate laws which are primarily for the benefit of the health and welfare of the people and for the welfare of those who had, for a long time, been kept down and made to suffer under the *laissez-faire* regime. When the world is clamouring for equitable distribution of wealth and when Constitutions of civilized countries of the world like that of India warrant Fundamental Rights as also economic leisure, freedom and welfare to all in society, and guarantee equality in all matters, social, economic and civic we are having, and should have, more and more of welfare laws for enabling the Executive to go ahead with the welfare plans undertaken in welfare states. It is really with regard to these laws of strict social welfare that we are concerned for the purpose of this Chapter.

**Origin of Social Legislation.**—The roots of social legislation can be traced to discontentment emanating from various social ills and inequalities which went unnoticed and unremedied under the earlier laws and earlier social order, when everyone looked for himself with God above for all. Man was selfish. He looked to his own gains, and at the expense of his poorer brethren and by exploitation of the poorer classes in society he thrived and prospered. Discontentment was the universal result. The maladies of society were studied and fully diagnosed by men of thought who had also the milk of human kindness in their breast. Humanitarians agitated both in society and through legislative channels and clamoured that the inequalities found in society should be put an end to and that human suffering should be mitigated and the woes of the poor, suffering and down-trodden should be looked into and redressed.

So far as the history of social legislation, in the case of each particular evil or ill, is concerned, that has to be dealt with separately in the review of the measures taken towards the

advancement of human society through legislation. That shall be done accordingly at the relevant places.

**Factory Legislation.**—There was a time, in the good old days, when artisans played an important part. The worker at marble, bronze, stone or wood, could make beautiful and artistic articles, and could claim them to his personality with regard to those articles. The worker took a lively interest in his work, which he loved. With the small-scale industry, he was contented and prosperous in his own way. But with the coming of the Iron Age and the development of the use of machines in the manufacturing of articles of utility, the worker came to lose his personality and individuality and came to be regarded as a mere slave of the machine. To his woe the machine became his master, and he became a victim to the monotonous and painful life in factories with unhealthy surroundings.

In course of time the machine produced a large quantity of wealth, to the glory of economics which was then regarded as the bare science of wealth, that is to say, the science relating to the production of wealth. Capitalists thrived on the exploitation of labour. The labourer was worse than a beast of burden. He was doomed to toil which led to a complete devastation of his personality. Though the machine was supposed to produce at least the benefit of economic leisure, so that the workman might after the end of woeful toils of a hard and monotonous day get some relief in the healthy atmosphere of nature or could display the creative faculty within him, yet it is a remarkable fact that the workman was deprived of all the economic leisure and was not given the slightest chance of leisure for the working of the natural abilities within him. While the industrialist lived in pomp and luxury, the worker had to pass his monotonous and woeful existence in slums, which were most unhealthy and not fit even for human habitation. Animals and birds of the day were free and happier than the unfortunate factory labourer. While the peasant worked with his farm and bullocks he was happy, but when mechanisation came even there, he became the servant of the *jagirdar*.

We may well be reminded of poet Oliver Goldsmith's lines:

Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey,  
Where wealth accumulates, but men decay.

Indeed, if economics be a mere science of the production of wealth, and no more, then moralists and humanitarians would certainly weep and sympathise with the exploited classes. Economics today in a humanitarian society, when the *laissez-faire* concept no longer holds good, is a science which deals with production and distribution of wealth. In social welfare societies, we should be more concerned with, and value more, the economics of welfare than the economics of production and we should look to an equitable distribution of wealth.

Now let us have a historical retrospect of labour legislation. Labour legislation dawns with the initiative taken by the mill-owners of Manchester and Lancashire, so far as India is concerned. On the whole, the credit for having started the game of industrial legislation goes to England. The Factory Laws of England inspired other countries in the matter of industrial legislation. The industrial Revolution is really an epoch-maker. The year 1802 witnessed the passage of the first Factory Act, in England, whereby something was started in the nature of state interference in individual life. The Factory Act of 1802 applied only to children in the cotton industry, and that too with reference to the children of the poor houses. It did not apply to the other children employed in factories. This Act also provided for slight educational facilities for poor children and limited the hours of work to 12 per day for children under the age of nine.

The Cotton Factories Regulation Act, 1819, provided measures for free children working in cotton factories. Under this Act, children under nine years of age could not be employed at all in factories. Children above the age of nine and under 16 were not allowed to work for more than 12 hours per day. This clearly shows how even in spite of legislative reform, tender children under the age of 16 had to drudge in factories for so long a painful period as 12 hours every day. What could then the position have been before even this slight limitation of hours of work to 12

per day; indeed, the more we think of it, the more horrified we feel. Famished children, deprived of the benefit of education, had to be subjected to such a merciless treatment for such a long period of time, to the detriment of their health and even their growth, physical and mental.

In 1833, the provisions of the Cotton Factories Regulation Act of 1819 were extended to workers in textile industry. Hours of work were limited to eight per day for children above nine and under 13 years of age. Children under nine could not be employed at all in factories. Factory Inspectors were appointed to see that the provisions of the Law were satisfied and not violated by unscrupulous employers.

In 1842, factory legislation prevented the employment of women in mines. In 1844, legislation was effected providing for the proper guarding and fencing of machinery and for limiting the hours of work of women to 12 per day, and prohibiting work during night for women. That legislation also limited child labour to half the day so that during the other half of the day, children could attend school.

The year 1847 marks an epoch in factory legislation in England. Women and children were not allowed to work for more than 10 hours per day.

In 1867, factory legislation extended the benefits conferred on workers by previous legislation, to all factories and workers therein.

In India, a Factory Commission was appointed in 1875. In 1881, the recommendations of the Commission were mainly accepted and legislation followed accordingly. Under the Factories Act, 1881, the term, factory was defined as any place of work where machinery driven by power was used and at least 100 persons were employed for at least four months in the year. This Act forbade the employment of children under seven years of age in factories and limited the hours of work to nine per day. But adult men and women had not the benefit of restricted hours of work, and that was a great drawback of the Factories Act of 1881.

In 1884, another Factory Commission was appointed, and in 1890 a Factory Labour Commission was appointed. As a result

of these Commissions' conclusions, the Factories (Amendment) Act of 1891 was passed. Under that Act, a factory came to be defined as any place of work where at least 50 persons were employed and where machinery was power-driven. A person under the age of 14 was considered a child. Children under nine years of age could not be employed at all. The hours of work of children above the age of 14 were limited to seven per day. Women could not be made to work for more than 11 hours per day.

The Factory Act, 1911, benefited to a great extent women and children working in factories. Children could not be made to work for longer than six hours per day. Women and children could not be employed at dangerous posts or functions or processes. Unless a child was certified as fit to work in a factory, he could not be employed to work in a factory. Adults could not be made to work for more than 12 hours per day.

The Factories Act of 1922 defined 'factory' as any place of work where machinery driven by power was utilised and at least 20 persons were employed. A person below 15 years of age was considered a child. Children under 12 could not be employed in a factory. Children could not be made to work for more than six hours per day, with an interval of half an hour for those who worked for more than five and a half hours per day. Adults could not be made to work more than eleven hours per day and sixty hours per week. No person could be made to work for more than five hours at a stretch and for more than 10 days at a stretch. For overtime work, extra payment was prescribed.

In 1932, the Factories Act, 1922, was revised and overhauled. In 1935, another Factories Act was passed. The Act of 1935 distinguished between seasonal and non-seasonal factories. In the group of seasonal factories were:

Those engaged in cotton ginning, cotton pressing, jute pressing, groundnuts, coffee, indigo, rubber, sugar and tea manufacturing factories.

If any of such kinds of factories worked for more than 180 days in the year, it could be declared by the State Government as a non-seasonal factory. Under this Act, a ten-hour day and a fifty-

four-hour week came to be prescribed for non-seasonal factories. For seasonal factories, the hours of work could not exceed eleven per day and sixty per week. This Act also provided for a new class, called 'adolescents'. Persons above 15 and under 17 years of age were described as adolescents. Adolescents could be employed as adults if certified fit for such work. Children between 12 and 15 years of age could not be made to work for more than five hours a day.

In 1945 the Factories Amendment Act was passed, which provided that adult workers who had completed 12 months' continuous service should be allowed holidays with pay for 10 days. Children were allowed holidays with pay for 14 days.

The year 1948 is remarkable in the history of factory legislation in India. The Act of 1948 provides for improving the conditions of workers in factories in India. This Act applies to factories which employ 10 or more workers, where work is done with the help of power, or 20 or more workers where work is done without the aid of power. The Factories Act, 1948 which is meant to provide improvements in the provisions of the Factories Act, 1934, did not make adequate provisions for the health and safety of the workers. The present Act, that is to say, the Factories Act of 1948 seeks to enlarge the scope of factory law and extends it to all places of work in factories.

The responsibility of having an effective discharge of the provisions of the Factories Act of 1948, rests with four authorities. The Central Government is charged with the final authority and responsibility. The actual administration of the Act is the responsibility of the State Governments. Factory Inspectors and Certifying Surgeons also are charged with respective responsibilities under this Act. The occupier or the owner of the factory is under the duty of compliance with the provisions of this Act, which also imposes certain obligations on the workers. This Act sees that factory owners or occupiers are not unduly harassed or penalised; at the same time, this Act sees that the worker is not pampered. This Act seeks to do justice, though its shortcomings are notable and they require eradication by legislation.



The Factories Act, 1948, looks to the conditions under which employees in factories have to work. It seeks to safeguard the health and safety of the workers by authorising State Governments to prescribe standards for adequate ventilation and protection against dust and fumes which emanate as a result of the manufacturing processes. The Act also provides for personal safety and facilities like those of lunch rooms, canteens, rest rooms, and creches where children of women workers can be guarded.

The Factories Act, 1948, provides for limitation of hours of work. An adult worker cannot be made to work for more than 48 hours per week or more than nine hours per day, with a rest period of at least half an hour after five hours of work. An 'adult' has been defined as a person who has completed 15 years but not 18 years of age. A 'child' is defined as a person who has not completed 15 years of age. A 'young person' is defined as a person who is either a child or an adolescent. 'Occupier of factory' is defined as a person who has ultimate control over the affairs of the factory and where these affairs are entrusted to a managing agent, such agent shall be deemed to be the occupier of the factory.

Under the Factories Act, 1948, a child who has not completed the fourteenth year of his age cannot be employed in a factory; but a child who has completed 14 years of age but is under 18 years of age can be employed provided he is not made to work more than for four hours and a half per day and provided his employment is not between 7 p.m. and 6 a.m.

The abovementioned improvements brought about in factory life by the Factories Act, 1948, are a happy indication that society is now realizing that the worker is a human being and not a beast of burden or a piece of machinery. The appointment of Inspectors and Certifying Surgeons and the powers of control given to the Central Government and the State Governments, if properly worked, would certainly go a long way towards ensuring the health, safety and protection of the workers. Limitation of hours of work, particularly for women, and even more particularly for children and adolescents, goes towards ensuring that the life and safety of a worker are not at stake. Children can avail themselves

of the facilities of schooling, and thus learn while helping the poor parents at home. But the fact still remains that, inspite of the heavy fencing of machinery in factories, there are frequent accidents resulting in death or serious disablement or loss of limbs of workers. The worker also feels that he is still a tool of the machine and that he would have been happier had he a small scale industry of his own. He believes that the economic leisure which is so essential for the development of human personality is still lacking and that the Factories Act has not provided for enough of leisure for the factory worker. The result is that even a very intelligent worker does not find time or leisure for engaging himself in the display of his talents or the use of his brain-power in matters outside the factory. The result is that his case is left pitiable, and can be regarded as: "The unlit lamp and the untilled soil."

Nothing has still been done in India, under the Companies Act, or under any other law, for giving the worker a share in the management. There is no provision for allowing a worker any type of membership in the Board of Directors of the factory-company. The worker does not still feel that he is on quite equitable terms with the employer, and he still sees the vast gulf between the employer and himself.

**Workmen's Compensation.**—The Workmen's Compensation Act is an important and valuable piece of labour legislation. It is for the benefit of unfortunate workers employed in factories and other places where, in the course of the occupation, some danger may be involved to their life or limb. By casting absolute liability on the employer, the legislature has very wisely protected the worker whose lot otherwise is miserable or whose dependants otherwise would suffer heavily. It provides that the employer shall be held liable to compensate the worker for disablement, or in the case of his death, his dependants, if the disablement or death occurs as a result of an accident to the worker while in the course of the employment at the establishment of his employer. The employer is absolutely liable, that is to say, he is responsible even though there was no fault, default or negligence on the part of the employer or his agent. If, however, the injury (not resulting in death) has

been caused by an accident which is due to the workman having been at the time of the accident under the influence of liquor or drugs, or if the injury was caused by an accident which is the result of wilful disobedience, on the part of the worker, of an order expressly given or of a rule expressly framed for securing the safety of the worker, or is due to the wilful removal or disregard by the worker of any safety measure which he knew to have been provided for securing the safety of the workers, the employer cannot be held liable for the injury. Where the injury results in death of the workman, compensation must be made by the employer to the dependants of the worker, even though the injury was due to the fault of the worker himself. Section 9 of the Act provides that the compensation which may be made is not assignable, attachable or chargeable.

Where a Commissioner appointed under the Workmen's Compensation Act receives any information from any person or from any source that a workman has expired as a result of an accident arising out of and in the course of his employment, he (the Commissioner) may send, by registered post, a notice to the workman's employer requiring him to submit, within 30 days of the service of the notice, a statement, in the prescribed form, giving the circumstances relating to the death of the workman and stating whether in the opinion of the employer, he is or is not liable to deposit an amount as compensation on account of the death. If the employer is of the opinion that he is liable to deposit an amount as compensation, he must make the deposit within 30 days of the service of the notice. If the employer is of the opinion that he is not liable, he must, in his statement, show the grounds on which he denies liability. Section 10B provides for reports of fatal accidents to be made to the Commissioner.

Section 15 of the Workmen's Compensation Act makes special provisions relating to Masters and Seamen. The provisions of the Act, are, under Section 15, applicable to seamen, subject to modifications under Section 15.

**Payment of Wages.**—The Payment of Wages Act, 1936, has the object of bringing about an easy and expedient mode of pay-

ment of wages to industrial workers. Such workers are saved the trouble of resorting to unnecessary and protracted litigation. It is here suggested that this Act should be made applicable to non-industrial workers also. The act does not apply to wages payable in respect of a wage-period which, over such wage-period, average two hundred rupees per month or more. This Act applies to such other classes of workers employed in an industrial establishment or in any class or group of industrial establishments as the State Government by notification in the Gazette may have declared. Every employer to whom this Act applies, is bound to pay the accrued wages.

Under the Minimum Wages Act, 1948, minimum rates of wages in certain employments have been fixed and there are also periodical revisions of such rates. It is open to the Government to fix and revise minimum wages payable to employees in employments, such as oil mills, rice mills, public motor transport and agriculture.

**Industrial Disputes.**—Under the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947, industrial disputes may be referred to a Board, a Court or a Tribunal. The Government has the discretion in the matter of deciding whether an industrial dispute exists or not and to refer or not to refer it to a court of enquiry, a labour court, an industrial tribunal, or a Board of Conciliation. The defect, however, of this Act is that it is highly uncertain as to the authority to which the dispute may be referred by the Government. Moreover, the award or decision arrived at by the authority to which the dispute is referred, may be modified by the Government or may even be set aside if the Government is of the opinion, that on public grounds, it is not advisable to enforce the award or the decision of the authority concerned.

**Social Insurance for Workers.**—The Employees' State Insurance Act, 1948, confers the benefit of social insurance for workers. Under the Act, there is provision for the creation of a common fund called the Employees' State Insurance Fund. Contributions by employers and employees as are payable under the Act, and gifts and grants from the Central or the State Governments, local

authorities or bodies, are also to be collected in this Fund. Medical treatment to insured persons and the members of their family can be afforded out of this fund. Under the Act, all factory workers, or employees in establishments to which the Act applies, must be compulsorily insured. Employees whose average daily wages are lower than one rupee need not contribute at all to the Fund. Employers, however, must contribute twice the amount of the contributions made by employees. The Act provides for sickness benefit, medical benefit, disablement benefit, benefit for dependants and maternity benefit.

**Trade Unions.**—For the protection of workers against oppression or exploitation by capitalist organizations or employers without sentiment, the institution of the Trade Union is a powerful weapon of defence. Exploitation of the worker led to dissatisfaction, which, in turn, led to the workers forming unions for the protection of their own interests.

For a considerable period of time, trade unions were regarded as illegal bodies and their members were rendered liable to punishment. But in spite of all the hardships against the trade unionists, they continued their efforts which ultimately led them to success and legal recognition of trade unions. The law ultimately came to realize that trade unions serve a useful social and economic purpose, in so far as they were meant for settling wages and bringing about harmonious relations between capital and labour. The law ultimately allowed the workers to improve the conditions of their employment.

Under the Indian Trade Unions Act, 1926, a trade union is any association for the purpose of regulating the relations between employer and employees and between employees *inter se* and for imposing conditions on the conduct of any trade or business. It includes any Federation of two or more Unions also. Under the Constitution of India also, citizens of India have the fundamental right to form associations or unions, in a legitimate manner, as provided under Article 19 (1) (c).

**Agricultural Economics and Legislation.**—Just as legislation has helped the economics of welfare on the industrial side, it has

also helped, and does help, agricultural economics. Laws such as the Agricultural Debtors Relief Acts, Zamindari Abolition Acts and laws preventing fragmentation of agricultural holdings have done much in the sphere of agricultural welfare.

#### **Legislation Relating to Public Health, Safety and Morals.—**

Under the Indian Penal Code as also under Statutes, liability, civil or criminal, is cast upon persons who endanger public health, safety or morals. An important maxim of law is *salus populi est suprema lex*, that is to say, that law is the best which is for the good of society. At times, under the principle of strict or absolute liability, a person may be held liable even though he is not aware that something wrongful is being done in his trade or business or on his premises. Supposing a person is the owner of a restaurant, supposing he buys milk from a dairy, supposing the servant of the dairy owner adds plenty of water to the milk which is supplied by the dairyman to the owner of the restaurant, supposing an Inspector under the Prevention of Adulteration Act, visits the restaurant and, inserting the lactometer in the milk-can, discovers that the milk is highly adulterated, and supposing the owner of the restaurant is innocent of the fact, can he be held liable in a criminal court, and can he be fined under the law relating to prevention of adulteration of consumable commodities? Yes; though there was no *mens rea*, the restaurant proprietor is liable on the principle of absolute liability.

Under the Bombay Prevention of Adulteration Act, 1925, an inspector can visit any shop where eatables and drinks are sold and take a sample of the article suspected by him to have been adulterated, and can take it to the chemical analyser for analysis. If the article is found to have been adulterated, the seller or the intending seller, can be charged and punished. Under the Acts relating to Weights and Measures, such as the Bombay Weights and Measures Act, 1932, an Inspector, authorised under Section 22, can, under section 134, enter any place within the area for which he is appointed to inspect and test any weights, measures or weighing or measuring instruments for use in trade and may seize and detain such weights, measures or instruments, on the

ground that they are not of the standard denomination or are false or defective, or used fraudulently, or unstamped or with a forged stamp.

Our law also protects us against acts of public nuisance or private nuisance and against acts which are dangerous to life or safety. Thus, if a person drives his car recklessly or dangerously, he can be held up, and punished, even though no accident actually took place, because his act could be said to be capable of causing a mishap. The Indian Penal Code sufficiently guards against negligence. Section 279 of the Indian Penal Code punishes negligent driving or riding on a public way. Section 286 punishes negligent conduct with respect to explosive substance. Section 287 punishes negligent conduct with respect to machinery. Section 304/A punishes for the offence of causing death by rash or negligent act. Section 289 punishes negligent conduct in respect of animals. Sections 268 to 294 deal with acts of public nuisance and prescribe punishment.

For the purpose of mitigating nuisance caused by beggars on public streets, there are Beggars Acts, such as the Bombay Beggars Act, 1945. Under Sections 4 and 7 of the Act, beggars may be arrested by the Police and begging has been made an offence. There are Receiving Centres and Certified Institutions for keeping beggars where they may be trained or allotted work (Section 13). Under Section 15, there is a provision for a Poor Fund for every Receiving Centre and Certified Institution. Section 16 provides for a Visiting Committee and Section 17 describes the duties of the Visiting Committee. Under Section 22, a reformed beggar may be released on licence by the Chief Inspector after the latter is satisfied that the released person will not beg again or employ any one else to beg.

Under Section 363A of the Indian Penal Code (introduced by the Indian Penal Code (Amendment) Act, 1959), kidnapping or maiming of a minor for the purposes of begging is made punishable. Sub-section (1) of Section 363A provides that whoever kidnaps any minor, not being the lawful guardian of a minor, and obtains the custody of the minor, in order that such minor may be

employed or used for the purposes of begging, shall be punishable with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to ten years and shall also be liable to fine. Sub-section (2) of Section 363A provides that whoever maims any minor in order that such minor may be employed or used for the purposes of begging, shall be punishable with imprisonment for life, and shall also be liable to fine. Under Sub-section (3) of Section 363A, where any person (not being a lawful guardian of the minor) employs or uses the minor for begging, it should be presumed, unless the contrary is proved, that he kidnapped or otherwise obtained the custody of that minor in order that the minor might be employed or used for begging. Under Sub-section (4) of Section 363A, 'Begging' means (a) soliciting or receiving alms in a public place, whether under the pretence of singing, dancing, fortune-telling, performing tricks, or selling articles or otherwise; (b) entering any private premises for soliciting or receiving alms; (c) exposing or exhibiting, for obtaining alms, any sore, wound, injury, deformity or disease, whether of himself or of any other person or of any animal; (d) using a minor as an exhibit for soliciting or receiving alms. A 'minor' means a person under 16 years of age, in case of a male, or under 18 years of age in case of a female.

Offences against good morals are punishable against the Indian Penal Code, and also under local statutes, such as the Bombay Prevention of Gambling Act, the Bombay Prevention of Prostitution Act. Under the Prevention of Gambling Act, keepers and users of gambling houses are punishable. Gambling in common gaming houses is punishable with imprisonment or fine. Police officers are entitled to enter and search gambling houses, and to seize things suspected to have been used or intended to be used for gambling. The Bombay Prevention of Prostitution Act mitigates the evils of soliciting and prostitution. Soliciting in public, prostitution in places of public entertainment or amusement, living on the earnings of prostitution, procuration of any woman or girl (whether with or without her consent), importing of a woman or girl for prostitution, unlawful detention for prostitution are all



punishable. The Police are allowed the power to enter premises, under the authority of the Commissioner of Police.

**The Position of Women under the Law.**—Manu had said: “Woman is always under tutelage. Before marriage, she is under her father’s guardianship; after marriage, she is under the control of her husband; and after widowhood, her eldest son becomes her guardian, so to say.” True enough as this saying was, in earlier days, it does not hold good today. The position of a married woman is as secure in law as that of a *feme sole*. Before the passage of the Married Woman’s Separate Property Acts, even the property of a married woman belonged to her husband. But after the passage of these Acts, a married woman enjoys as much of proprietary status and rights as an unmarried woman.

The Hindu Marriage Act, 1955, which is an Act to amend and codify the law relating to marriage among Hindus, is a very praiseworthy piece of social legislation. The greatest merit of this Act lies in the fact that it introduces monogamy among the Hindus. Even prior to the passage of this Act, there were local acts in certain States, as for example in Bombay, whereby polygamy was forbidden among Hindus. Under the Hindu Prevention of Bigamous Marriages Act, Hindus domiciled in Bombay were prevented from the practice of polygamy, so that a Hindu could not avoid the provisions of this Act by even going away to some other State where there was no such legislation, with a view to contracting another marriage there. Now under the all-India Act, that is to say, the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955, monogamy has been introduced under which marriage is the voluntary union for life, so that neither spouse to the marriage could re-marry during the lifetime of the other spouse. ‘Spouse’ means a lawfully married husband or wife. If a person has been victimised by misrepresentation and innocently is a party to a bigamous marriage, it is open to him or her to take a declaration from a court that his or her marriage is null and void.

Under the Mohommedan Law, it is open to a Muslim male to marry as many as four living wives. It is also open to a Muslim male to pronounce divorce without even an approach to a court of law, though the Muslim wife can only obtain a divorce through

a court of law. It is submitted that the time has come for the Muslims also to follow in the footsteps of the Hindus and effect legislation of a meritorious type like the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955.

The Hindu Succession Act of 1956 has also taken steps in the direction of progress by ameliorating the lot of the Hindu woman whether the wife, the daughter or the widow.

Under Section 13 of the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955, any marriage solemnized whether before or after the commencement of this Act, may, on the petition by either the husband or the wife, be dissolved by a decree of divorce on the ground that the other party is living in adultery, or has ceased to be a Hindu by conversion to another religion, or has been incurably of insane mind, for a continuous period of at least three years immediately prior to the presentation of the petition before the Court; or has, for a period of at least three years immediately prior to the petition, been suffering from a virulent and incurable form of leprosy; or has, for at least three years before the presentation of the petition been suffering from venereal disease in a communicable form; or has renounced the world by entering a religious order, or has not been heard of, as alive, for seven years or longer; or has not resumed co-habitation for a period of two years or longer after a decree for judicial separation was passed against the party; or has failed to comply with a decree for restitution of conjugal rights for a period of two years or upwards after the decree was passed.

A wife may also present a petition for the dissolution of her marriage by a decree of divorce on the ground that the husband has married again before the commencement of this Act or that any other wife of the husband married before the commencement of this Act was alive at the time of the solemnization of the marriage of the petitioner, provided that in either case, the other wife is alive at the time of the presentation of the petition also. The wife can also petition on the ground that the husband has, since the solemnization of the marriage, been guilty of rape, sodomy or bestiality.

The Hindu Succession Act, 1956, amends and codifies the law relating to intestate succession among the Hindus. Under

Section 14 of this Act, the property of a female Hindu is her absolute property. Section 15 of the Act provides general rules of succession in the case of female Hindus. Section 16 gives the order of succession and manner of distribution among heirs of a female Hindu.

Under the provisions of the Hindu Adoptions and Maintenance Act, 1956, a female Hindu is entitled to have both an adopted son and an adopted daughter, and both can be her heirs and can take them simultaneously.

Section 20 of the Hindu Succession Act provides for the right of a child in the womb. A child who was in the womb at the time of death of an intestate and who is subsequently born alive shall have the same right to inherit the intestate's estate as if he or she had been born alive before the death of the intestate, and the inheritance shall be deemed to vest in such a case with effect from the date of the death of the intestate.

Section 23 of the Hindu Adoptions and Maintenance Act, 1956, provides that it shall be in the discretion of the Court to determine whether any, and if so what, maintenance shall be awarded under the provisions of this Act, and in doing so, the Court shall have due regard to the considerations given under sub-section (2) and (3) of Section 23.

In determining the amount of maintenance, if any, which may be awarded to a wife, children or aged or infirm parents under this Act, regard shall be had, to the position and status of the parties, the reasonable wants of the claimants, the value of the claimant's property and any income from such property or the claimant's own earnings and the number of persons entitled to maintenance. If the claimant is living separately, the court should consider whether the claimant is justified in living separately and in claiming maintenance while living separately.

Under the Parsi law of intestate succession, females are treated rather unfairly and inequitably, and male heirs are given, by far bigger shares than female heirs; the law should be amended so as to put the males and females on equality.

Under the Mahommedan Law, a Muslim is permitted to have as many as four wives at the same time, but not more. If a Muslim marries beyond this restriction, his marriage, nevertheless, with the fifth wife is not void, but merely irregular. But whereas bigamy is allowed, polyandry is forbidden. A Muslim woman cannot lawfully have more than one husband at the same time; any marriage in contravention of this provision of Mahommedan Law is void and not merely irregular. Moreover, a Muslim woman marrying again in the lifetime of her husband is liable to punishment under the Indian Penal Code for the offence of bigamy. The offspring of such a bigamous marriage is illegitimate, and cannot be made legitimate by acknowledgement.

A Muslim male may divorce his wife by the mere pronouncement of *talak*. But a Muslim woman cannot divorce her husband in such a manner. A Muslim wife cannot have divorce by mere pronouncement of her will; she has to bring a suit for a judicial decree for dissolution of her marriage. But where there was a contract made before or after the marriage that the wife shall be at liberty to divorce her husband, she is entitled to divorce him. It is open to a Muslim wife to sue for a decree of divorce, under the Dissolution of Muslim Marriages Act, 1939. Under this Act, a Muslim wife can pray for divorce, on any of the grounds, namely: (1) that the whereabouts of the husband are unknown for a period of four years; (2) failure of the husband to provide for maintenance of the wife for a period of two years; (3) that the husband has been sentenced to imprisonment for seven years or more; (4) that the husband has, without reasonable cause, failed to perform his marital obligations; (5) that the husband is impotent; (6) that the husband is insane; (7) that the wife has repudiated her marriage; (8) that the husband is guilty of cruelty; and (9) that there is some other ground supporting the wife's claim under the Mahommedan Law.

It is here submitted that just as a Muslim wife can claim divorce only on a lawful ground so also under the Dissolution of Muslim Marriages Act, or as allowed under the Mahommedan Law, should a Muslim husband be allowed divorce *only on a statutory ground*

*or a ground allowed under the Mohommedan Law, and that he should not be allowed to divorce his wife by a mere talak. It is also submitted that polygamy should be abolished.* No doubt, when under Islam, permission was given to a Muslim male to marry as many as four living wives, the circumstances were totally different from what they are today. That was the time when the number of women was far in excess of men, and women were a stay-at-home people. Today, however, it is not necessary for a man to be so kind enough as to marry as many as four living wives, and, whether the number of women be greater than that of men or otherwise, women are quite capable of maintaining themselves because they are highly educated and have entered every profession and captured even manly occupations. *Just as polyandry is forbidden, polygamy should be put an end to.* It is high time the Muslims followed into the footsteps of their sister community, the Hindu Community, and have a law passed similar to the Hindu Marriage Act.

**The Care of Children through Legislation.**—We have already seen how children were victimised by employers of factories and mines till legislation intervened and prohibited employment of children in mines and restricted the employment and working hours of children and young persons in factories.

We shall now examine legislation for the care of neglected children. For the protection of children likely to go astray and for the protection of delinquent children, there are Children's Aid Societies and Certified and Industrial Schools, and there are institutions, under the provisions of the Borstal Schools Act. The English Borstal Law has been adopted in India subject to necessary modifications. We have the Bengal Borstal Schools Act, the Bombay Borstal Schools Act, the Madras Borstal Schools Act, the Punjab Borstal Schools Act, the U.P. Borstal Schools Act, and so on. Borstal Schools have been established in the different states. The Borstal system is essentially an English institution for the reformation of the young offenders, and it has a great value.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>M. J. Sethna, *Society and the Criminal*, Bombay: Leaders' Press Ltd., p. 361.

In England, it was in the reign of Queen Victoria that, thanks to the activities of humanitarians like Sir Thomas Buxton, William Wilberforce Macintosh, Mathew Hill, Scarlet, the Gurneys and Frys and Sydney Turner, legislation was effected; and the efforts of Charles Dickens led to the Reformatory Schools Act of 1854.

The parent of the modern industrial school, for juvenile delinquents was the Ragged School started, in 1818 by John Pounds. The poorest children in Portsmouth were admitted to his school where he made them docile, transforming their roughness of manners to a geniality of disposition and taught them shoe-making, as an industry, and the three R's. After the demise of Pounds, Dr. Guthrie established Ragged Schools in Edinburgh. This movement developed, and another great worker, Miss Mary Carpenter, founded the Ragged School in Bristol. It goes to the great credit of this noble lady that she even visited India and started Ragged Schools here on the same lines as in Bristol.

Till 1891, the Reformatory Schools Act had a bad defect, in so far as it provided that a juvenile, before being sent to a Reformatory, must be kept in prison. That defect was removed, in 1891, when the provision requiring detention first in prison was abolished.

This followed the Summary Jurisdiction Act, 1879, and the First Offender Act, 1887, providing for the conditional release of first offenders. That Act was followed by the Act of 1907, which gave wider powers to courts with regard to individualisation of offenders and their treatment.

The Consolidating Act of 1933 provided for protective and preventive measures. This Act has conferred powers on courts with regard to children who have not committed any offence but are likely to commit an offence if their environment is not changed. The Act gives the Juvenile Court protective and preventive powers.

The Reformatory Schools Act, 1897, prescribed provisions for dealing with juvenile delinquents under 16 years of age in the State of Bombay, and under 15 years of age in other States. But as stated in the Report of the Committee of Enquiry into the Care of Destitute Children and Young Offenders, 1933, the Act of 1897

had made no provision for the detention of girls in Reformatory Schools. In 1917, action was taken in Bombay, thanks to the efforts of Sir Rustom Masani, to deal effectively with delinquent or destitute boys or girls. The apathy of the public towards juvenile delinquents was deplored by Colonel Jackson, Inspector General of Prisons, in his Annual Report to the Bombay Jail Department for the year 1914. In 1917, the Society for the Protection of Children in Western India was established. On February 28, 1918, a memorandum was submitted to the Government for necessary legislation for the benefit of destitute children and juvenile delinquents. In 1924, the Bombay Children Act was passed, and in 1927, it was finally put into operation. The present Bombay Children Act is that of 1948. This Act has made provisions for the proper custody and due protection of children and for dealing with offences in relation to children. The Act deals also with youthful offenders. Under the Act, a 'child' means any boy or girl under 16 years of age. Under this Act, Children's cases are triable exclusively by the Juvenile Court. Under this Act, a Police Officer, or other authorised person, can produce before a Juvenile Court, a child who is homeless or without subsistence or destitute with a parent or guardian suffering transportation or undergoing sentence of imprisonment or under the protection or care of a person who could be regarded as incapable of being the child's guardian, or found in the company of a thief or a prostitute or exposed, in any way, to moral danger, or liable to enter into a career of crime.

A Juvenile Court can send a delinquent child to a certified school or home, or commit him to the guardianship of a relative or any other proper person who is willing to undertake or accept such responsibility regarding the child.

Any adult person who has victimised or cruelly treated any child can be dealt with at law and punished by the Juvenile Court. Offences against children are cognizable. Making or allowing a child to beg renders the person concerned liable to punishment. Going about with a child in charge, in a drunken state, or giving intoxicating liquor or dangerous drug to a child or allowing it to enter any place where such liquor or drug is sold, or inciting a

child to bet or borrow, is all punishable. Police officers have the power to seize any cigarette, tobacco or smoking material or instrument found in the possession of a child found smoking in any public place or street.

There are Children Acts in other States also, namely, West Bengal, Madras, Delhi, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Mysore, Kerala and Hyderabad. In the States where there are no Children Acts, the Reformatory School Act is in force.

The idea behind legislation for the benefit of juveniles and children is that of protection and not punishment. Again, since prevention is better than cure, the Juvenile Courts are empowered even to take custody of children who have not committed any crime but are likely to commit some offence. Such children are taken care of in Children's Homes.





## CHAPTER

### 8

#### Social Security Measures

S. D. PUNEKAR, Ph.D.

सर्वेऽपिः सुखिनः सन्तु । सर्वे सन्तु निरामयाः ॥  
सर्वे भद्राणि पश्यन्तु । न कश्चित्दुःखमाप्नुयात् ॥

*(Let all of us be happy; let us be all free from ill-health; let us all see a bright future; let nobody suffer from any sorrow).*

THE wishes expressed in the above Vedic hymn symbolise the concept of comprehensive social security. Thus, this concept is an old one, even though the term, the laws and the institutions, which have been built around this concept, may be of recent origin. The term itself, in its present sense, is being used only since 1935, when the U.S. passed its Social Security Act. Its mention in the Atlantic Charter of 1941 made it a popular slogan, voicing one of the deepest and most widespread aspirations of mankind. Social Security has thus been a new name for an old aspiration.<sup>1</sup>

The idea of social security has arisen out of the deep and eternal need of man for some measure of security for his immediate future. A man (or a woman) has to face a number of contingencies or risks right from his (or her) birth. These contingencies include employment injury, industrial disease, invalidity or disablement, ill-health or sickness, maternity or childbirth, old age, burial, widowhood, orphanhood and unemployment. During these contingencies, it becomes difficult for the person concerned either to work, (e.g., because of injury, sickness, invalidity or

<sup>1</sup>I.L.O. *Social Security—A Worker's Education Manual* (1958); Chapter I of this book is entitled "Social Security—A new name for an Old Aspiration".

maternity) or to obtain work, (e.g., unemployment). This difficulty to work and earn is particularly felt, when the need for means of subsistence is more acute. Further, in case of most of the contingencies, because of the physical incapacity to work, the need for providing medical care arises. Hence any effective scheme of social protection must fulfil the requirements of provision of (a) income security, and (b) medical care.

**Earlier Forms of Social Security.**—The various contingencies mentioned above affected mankind from times immemorial, since our economic and social activities started. Naturally, some attempts were made during the centuries to find out effective safeguards in mitigating the evils arising out of these contingencies. Methods tried on the individual plane consisted of thrift and credit. For example, whenever a person fell sick, he tried to meet the necessary expenses (medical and maintenance) through his savings and sometimes by borrowing from his friends or relatives. However, in case of low-income groups, both these methods proved ineffective, mainly because poor persons could neither save nor get any credit. Social security schemes are primarily meant for low-income persons, who suffer from economic hardships during the various contingencies.

Social protection was also attempted on the family or community level. In India, the joint family and the caste systems provided in a crude form some protection of social security to the needy and the hapless. Despite its deficiencies, the joint family system protected the members of the household from the evil effects of the various contingencies. For example, whenever any member of a joint family fell ill or became disabled, he was looked after by the other members of the family. Similarly, the economic hardships of unemployment or old age were not felt by individual members of a joint family, because the head of the family undertook the responsibility, which is now normally taken by a social security agency. On a broader but similar basis, the caste system provided various safeguards to their members, in such forms as educational assistance (scholarships, freeships, etc.) to the poor students, financial assistance to widows and orphans

and medical aid to the sick and invalid. Benefits are normally restricted only to the members of the sect or caste and the usual method followed is to collect donations and subscriptions from the rich members and to distribute benefits, generally in cash, to the less fortunate members, without any equitable or definite principles of collection or distribution. The risks of social security are thus covered by the simple, natural and solid fellowship of the family or the caste. With the growth of individualism and liberalism under the Western influence, both the systems of joint family and caste are losing their hold and hence are proving ineffective as social security agencies. This drawback is particularly felt in the urban areas, where, primarily for economic reasons, persons migrate to cities, leaving their joint families in rural areas. Another important factor in the disintegration of joint families and castes is the hostility of the secular State towards these sectarian systems.

**Modern Forms of Social Security.**—The modern systematised methods of social security evolved themselves out of the modern industrialization, which brought into existence a new class of industrial proletariat. This class uprooted from its rural background possesses very meagre social and material resources, and hence is deeply affected by any contingencies, which bring in economic insecurity. Risks, like illness or unemployment, result in the complete absence of income or means of subsistence, thereby making the workers utterly helpless. The threat of economic security is far more acute in the case of an industrial worker than in the agriculture sector. Hence, though the need of social security had been often felt earlier, serious attention to it was given only after modern industrialization posed it as a part of the problems of industrial labour. Social security thus assumed an urban, industrial bias, though its necessity for non-industrial classes has never been denied.

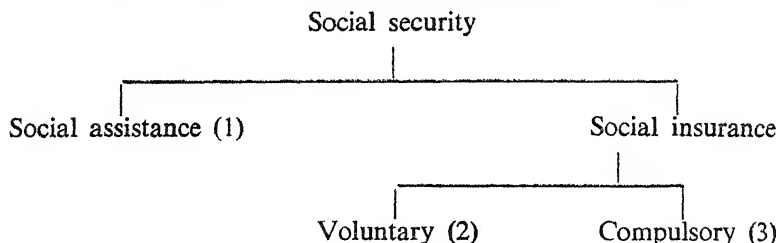
In the initial stages of industrialization, various methods were devised to protect the urban labouring classes from destitution.<sup>2</sup> Government sponsored savings banks were started for small depo-

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, for details see pp. 2—7.

sitors; the liability of maintenance was thrown on the employers (as in our Workmen's Compensation Act and the Maternity Benefit Acts); and private insurance was encouraged through the mutual aid movement. Most of these methods failed, and more effective safeguards had to be provided. After trial and error, the following three methods have come to stay, and together they form the field of social security.

- (1) Social or public assistance, where the element of insurance is absent and most of the money comes from the State Exchequer.
- (2) Voluntary social insurance, where the beneficiaries undertake to cover their risks themselves.
- (3) Compulsory social insurance.

Social security can, therefore, be explained as follows:



(1) **Social Assistance.**—This method is administered by Government services or local authorities. Public assistance is often supplemented by the efforts of private charitable institutions. "The characteristic feature of the assistance method is that benefits granted are of an origin external to the individuals and families concerned. They come from public or private communities, from fiscal or private sources and apply essentially to the least privileged to help themselves through their own efforts."<sup>3</sup> The credit of introducing this approach to social security goes to Denmark, which enabled self-respecting citizens to avoid recourse to poor relief and to claim the necessary benefit, as of legal right, from public

<sup>3</sup>Pierre Laroque, "Social Security and Social Services", *Bulletin of the International Social Security Association*, V, 10—11 (October—November 1952), p. 325.

funds. In India, the health services, provided by State Governments and local authorities, the old age pension scheme of the U.P. Government and the provision of free education to children of parents with less than an annual income of Rs. 1,200/- in Maharashtra State can be given as illustrations of the social assistance method. Non-contributory benefits are provided from public funds in prescribed types of need deemed not to be due to the fault of the beneficiary.

(2) **Voluntary Social Insurance.**—The method of voluntary social insurance is useful for better paid population, which can save and insure its future against various social risks. This method is in existence in various forms, such as the craft guilds, friendly societies, mutual companies and co-operative societies, which provide security to individual members during contingencies, mainly through monetary aid, financed by the payments into their common funds. The underlying principle is that of insurance, coupled with a mechanism for the distribution among many of the losses suffered by a few. The artisans's guilds in India and the *Nidhis* of Southern India can furnish proof of the existence of mutual insurance in India. A number of mutual insurance schemes, with limited objectives, are being run in this country; however, adequate information about them is not forthcoming. Hence it is difficult to draw any conclusions. State encouragement to these voluntary insurance efforts, either by protective legislation or by financial subsidies, is highly desirable.

Mutual insurance is one of the three major methods of trade unionism, the other two being collective bargaining and legal enactment.<sup>4</sup> However, most of the Indian trade unions have not followed this method, mainly because it pre-supposes the availability of financial resources, business knowledge and responsibility among the trade unionists. In the absence of these qualities, our trade unions are pre-occupied with the agitational approach.

Voluntary social insurance can also claim to be a part of the co-operative movement. Co-operation has been defined as a form

<sup>4</sup>Sidney and Beatrice Webb, *Industrial Democracy*, London: Longmans, Green & Co., Ltd. 1920.

of organization wherein persons voluntarily associate together as human beings on a basis of equality for the promotion of the economic interests of themselves. This definition reveals the following four principles of co-operation: (1) the association is mainly that of human beings rather than that of capital; (2) there is equality among the members, i.e., each member has only one vote; (3) the association is voluntary in character; and (4) the objectives of the association indicate a common interest of all members and the attainment of this interest necessitates the collection of contribution from each member. All these principles are equally applicable to voluntary social insurance. To quote from a report of the International Social Security Association, "Both signify a form of association of persons acting on the basis of equality and collective responsibility with a view to the promotion of their mutual welfare. This mutual welfare is not only of an economic character, but also of a moral and social character. Both promote the spirit of fellowship, the social sense, the spirit of providence and loyalty. They enable the propertyless masses to participate in their own advance; they stimulate the sense of initiative and responsibility, and train leaders from among the masses who will remain close to them and devoted to them." Voluntary social insurance, like co-operation, not only brings in the material benefit but is useful also as a training in democracy, in business management, in punctuality, confidence and self-reliance and in leadership.

(3) **Compulsory Social Insurance.**—Compulsory social insurance is of recent origin. It was in 1883 that Germany under Bismarck, mainly with a political motive, made sickness insurance compulsory for industrial workers. Since then compulsory social insurance has steadily developed, ever widening its scope, perfecting the systems of contributions and of benefits and systematically organizing autonomous institutions for the administration of the schemes. In India, compulsory social insurance is the basis of our Employees' State Insurance Act, 1948.

**Compulsion in Social Insurance.**—For almost half a century since 1883, compulsory social insurance developed as the most

appropriate method of social security. Voluntary insurance schemes failed to prove a success mainly because of lack of actuarial knowledge, the inadequate reserves, absence of proper supervision and general indifference of members. The State also threw its weight on the side of compulsory social insurance, because compulsion gave a handle to the State to control both capital and labour. Voluntary insurance has been so successfully declared a failure that it has now been generally agreed that some element of compulsion is necessary not only in the public interest but also in the interest of economy and administration of the insurance organization. It cannot, however, be denied that compulsion comes in the way of the democratic working of social security agencies and even the beneficiaries are reluctant to come within the scheme. It may, therefore, be desirable to explore the possibility of evolving a voluntary social insurance movement, without the defects which brought about its downfall, so that the advantages of voluntary insurance and co-operation could be reaped.

Experience has shown that it is premature to set up compulsory social security services in unhealthy or under-developed countries, in which the population is undernourished, badly clothed and where the dwelling problem is most acute. "A poor, under-developed country cannot, in the early stages of economic development, really afford much of the type of redistributive measures which in the advanced countries are known under the label of 'Social Security.'"<sup>5</sup> The introduction of a social security system can fully attain its objectives, if the beneficiaries are in almost normal state of health and if they already possess means of existence, which ensure them of a vital minimum.

**Social Security Measures in India.**—Compulsion in social security is usually enforced through legislation, which aims at coverage of the risks by providing benefits in cash and in kind to meet the contingencies. The social security legislation in the indus-

<sup>5</sup>Gunnar Myrdal, *Economic Theory and Under-developed Regions*, London: Gerald Duckworth & Co. Ltd. 1957, p. 82.



trial field in India consists of the following enactments:<sup>6</sup> (1) the Workmen's Compensation Act, 1923; (2) the Maternity Benefit Acts (1929-1948); (3) the Employees' State Insurance Act, 1948; (4) the Coal Mines Provident Fund and Bonus Schemes Act, 1948; (5) the Employees' Provident Fund Act, 1952; and (6) the Industrial Disputes (Amendment) Act, 1953 (providing for lay-off and retrenchment compensation). Of these, the first three provide security against the risks of employment injury, maternity and sickness, the next two against old age and the last one against retrenchment and unemployment. The first two and the last embody the principle of employers' liability and no contributory provision is made. Though medical care is a necessity in case of employment injury and maternity, no provision is made in the Acts under the first two heads. On the whole, the social security legislation suffers from such defects as uneven scope, inadequacy of benefits, duplication and overlapping provisions, and different administrative authorities for implementation and enforcement. A study group appointed by the Government of India has recommended the integration of the various social security measures with a unified scheme of administration and contribution, providing for medical care and coverage against sickness, maternity, employment injury, old age, and death. Implementation of the Study Group's recommendations would mean a marked advance on the path of social security.

**Comprehensive Social Security.**—The compulsory social insurance, risk by risk, started in 1883 by Germany and developed during the next half a century, gave way to the concept of comprehensive social security, which aims to cover all the citizens of the country against all possible risks. An important step in this direction was taken in 1938 by New Zealand, when she assembled in a coherent statute a number of existing and new social assistance benefits and imposed a special universal levy to finance them. Income security and medical care are provided to the entire popu-

<sup>6</sup>V. B. Singh and A. K. Saran (Eds.), *Industrial Labour in India*, Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1960. See the author's article—"Social Security Measures in India," pp. 219—233.

lation on the principle of the well-known maxim: "from each according to his ability, and to each according to his needs." The New Zealand Act of 1938 was enacted "to provide for the superannuation benefits and of other benefits designed to safeguard the people of New Zealand from disabilities arising from age, sickness, widowhood, orphanhood, unemployment or other exceptional conditions; to provide a system whereby medical or hospital treatment will be made available to persons requiring such treatment; and further to provide such other benefits as may be necessary to maintain and promote the health and general welfare of the community." The concept of comprehensive social security introduced in New Zealand found good support in the I.L.O. Recommendations (1944) on income security and medical care and in the Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952. The Convention divides the field of social security into nine divisions; (1) medical care; (2) sickness benefit; (3) unemployment benefit; (4) old age benefit; (5) employment injury benefit; (6) family benefit; (7) maternity benefit; (8) invalidity benefit; and (9) survivor's benefit. It takes into account the diversity of existing methods of organizing and financing social security and recognizes not only compulsory social insurance but also voluntary group insurance, with or without public subsidy and such methods as non-contributory pension plans. It fixes the level of benefits low enough to take account of the economic capacity of the less developed countries.

The concept of comprehensive social security was accepted by Lord Beveridge, when he described social security as an attack on five 'giants'—want, disease, ignorance, squalor and idleness. A comprehensive programme of social security, comprising income security, national health service, education, sanitation and full employment can free the society from these evils. The Beveridge Report on Social Insurance and Allied Services formed the basis of the British Social Security Legislation (1945-48) on family allowances, national insurance, national health service and national assistance, ushering social security for the entire population.

**Social Security and Social Work.**—Both social security and

social work administer assistance to the needy and hence are interlinked. Till recently, it was found difficult to demarcate a line dividing welfare work (of which social security is a part) and social work. A common man still thinks that charity, welfare work and social work are synonymous. Even many welfare administrators, especially public assistance administrators, believe that conducting or administering a welfare programme, regardless of whether the practitioners are professionally trained in social work, constitute welfare or social work.<sup>7</sup> However, it is being realized that though, at many points, social security and social work are similar, they are not the same thing. Social security includes social and economic institutions and has many fields of practice; social work, on the other hand, is a profession and consists of techniques or processes which may fruitfully be utilised in the social security field. The emphasis in social security is on institutional organization of the society, whereas social work puts an emphasis on individuals by developing their capacities so that they might themselves satisfy their own needs.

Social security is largely linked with the field of public welfare administration, which, though strictly lies outside the area of social work can be usefully exploited by social workers. It is generally agreed that social work is built round the three process courses: case work, group work and community organization. Public welfare administration is itself not a process but an area of activity; however, this area is particularly useful for practice of social work. A social worker can profitably use his techniques to improve the social services, which in their turn can add to the education and qualifications of a social worker.

Pierre Laroque, Hon. Director of Social Security in France, in an excellent article—*Social Security and Social Services*<sup>8</sup> enumerates the functions of a social worker in relation to social security. These may be summarised as follows:

<sup>7</sup>Helen I. Clarke, *Principles and Practice of Social Work*, New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1947, p. 16.

<sup>8</sup>*Bulletin of the International Social Security Association*, V, 10—11, (October-November 1952).

- (i) A social worker is a unifying element. When he conducts an inquiry into an individual case and attempts to solve it, he is really combining the action of the different services which might contribute in achieving the same purpose.
- (ii) He acts as a humanising factor in social security. He is able to make the action of social security more individual and more human by bringing the institution and its members closer together, by teaching members their rights and showing them how to carry out the formalities required.
- (iii) He is in a position to supplement medical action, by following a patient into his own home, guiding him in the utilisation of medical prescriptions and teaching and educating him in essential matters. He may also create social conditions more congenial for effective medical action.
- (iv) He is particularly useful in all that pertains to prevention, because of his direct and permanent contact with individuals and families.
- (v) He can function as an educator. The various risks of life are largely due either to ignorance on the part of individuals or families or psychological causes. Such insecurity could be reduced through educative action. A social worker's educational role can be particularly useful in the sphere of family psychology.

Laroque concludes: "The social worker can form the basis of the whole social policy of a country, not only because he has means at his disposal which only he can use, but also because he can, to a large extent, make up for the absence of much more expensive institutions, which can only be created gradually over a long period".<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup>Laroque, *op. cit.*, p. 340.



## **Part Three**

### **FIELDS OF SOCIAL WORK—A SHORT HISTORY**



## CHAPTER

### 9

#### *Child Welfare*

V. M. KULKARNI

To understand the conditions in the field of child welfare as at present, it is necessary to go back a few decades into the history of social change. In the early nineteenth century, most of the children grew in the traditional pattern, which showed very powerful local, regional, cultural and religious influences. Children were reared in a way of life and for a way of life which was quite different from the one we see around us today. During the last hundred years, old order continually changed giving place to new. The new influences came in, made their impact, penetrated into the mosaic pattern of life in India and progressively changed it in such a way that the traces of the old order in it became minor and the new order emerged from it. Children were mostly the responsibility of the family and the local village community. The family and the local village community were strong and the individual functioned mostly within the existing frame-work.

**The Changing Set up.**—With the development of communications, the economic life of the country, the political pattern of administration, spread of new ideas like liberty, equality and fraternity among the individuals disturbed the balance in the family and the village community, and they found themselves in a flux. New relationships among the members of the family had to be forged. The known needs of the family had to be met in a new way. The hitherto unknown needs had become known. In resources, knowledge and experience, the individual, the family and the community became inadequate and so were unable to give all that the children needed. The reallocation of the responsibilities in relation to children and their effective discharge were a new



challenge. For the last hundred years the struggle is going on to find a balance between the responsibilities of the parents, communities, functioning through voluntary organizations and the government at various levels. The changing conditions had to be studied systematically, a body of knowledge had to be developed. Proper planning had to be undertaken, legislative measures had to be formulated, responsibility between the family, voluntary agencies and the government had to be demarcated.

The following are some of the important measures that were needed to handle the situation effectively. A suitable administrative and organizational pattern had to be evolved; understanding of the needs of the child had to be promoted; necessary funds had to be allocated from the Public Exchequer and additional funds had to be raised; the professional and the volunteer leadership had to be trained, re-orientated so that in the total national activity the interests of the children were protected; positive social services had to be provided so that the normal children could use them and grow into healthy citizens; the socially, physically and emotionally handicapped children had to be helped through some services so that they could take advantage of all the facilities provided for normal children. Preventive measures had to be taken to prevent these vulnerable groups of population through the health and nutrition programmes, with a view to reducing the number of children joining the rank of special children: like those socially handicapped, emotionally disturbed, vagrant, the blind, the deaf and dumb, orthopaedically handicapped, mentally retarded and those with multiple handicaps. Victims of cruelty and exploitation had to be protected, re-educated and helped to rehabilitate themselves in the community in an atmosphere approximating wholesome home conditions in which normal children grow; the influence of mass media of communication on children had to be studied; the necessary trained personnel had to be made available. The agencies and services with at least minimum standards had to be established and conducted. Programmes for educating parents needed to be organized. And through all these activities a climate had to be created in the country so as to help

each one to do his duty to the child and the children grew in a healthy and happy atmosphere. By assessing the achievements of the country in respect of the above-mentioned measures, it will be possible for the country to know where it stands today in the field of child welfare. A beginning has been made in most of these areas, either by voluntary agencies or government, but both in quality and quantity there is plenty of scope to do more.

**Education.**—A million children are in the pre-primary age group. In this field mostly the voluntary agencies are active. The resources made available by government are meagre. It is essential to provide this service to the children of working mothers, particularly those who do not have any other member in the family to look after the young ones. The older children who are many a time made responsible for the young children need to be relieved for their education. The primary education is being extended and it seems that by 1965, every child between the age group 6-11 will get schooling facilities. These facilities would be available only to normal children. Children in need of special care will still remain outside the scope of free, compulsory and universal primary education. Even among the normal children many have not been and will not be able to attend schools for socio-economic reasons. This question will have to be looked into and measures will have to be undertaken. This is a matter of vital significance, particularly to children of low-income group families, backward classes and scheduled tribes. Educational facilities for the age group 11-16 will continue to be meagre. There the emphasis has to be on technical and vocational education and training accompanied by vocational guidance. If under the existing economic circumstances thousands of children in this age group have to work, their working conditions will have to be so regulated as to convert the situation into an apprenticeship-cum-training programme.

**Health.**—The spread of health services will be determined by the available resources both in funds and in man power. The real work needs to be done in relation to abolition of epidemics improvement in environmental sanitation and health education. Parents, teachers and others who work with children must be made

aware about the hazards to which children are exposed in the absence of adequate preventive measures. Those who work with children must also know what services are available and how best to use the existing services. In relation to nutrition, studies have been undertaken. The needs of the child and of his eating habits reveal that this question is partly related to the general poverty in the country. But it is also realized that within the existing budget, greater benefits can be secured through education of parents in the choice of more nutritious food.

**Recreational and Cultural Activities.**—The organizations like the Scouts and Guides, the N.C.C., the St. John's Ambulance, the Balkan-ji-bari, Children's Little Theatre, Children's Film Society, *Andhra Bala Nand Sangham*, Kishore Dal, *Manimela*, *Shankar's* International Art Competitions, Children's Books Trust, children's special numbers of the *Shankar's Weekly* in English and of *Sadhana* in Marathi, the publications for children by the Southern Languages Book Trust, children's books, magazines, papers, children's clubs and special programmes of the All India Radio and similar other activities, national awards of the Indian Council for Child Welfare, co-curricular activities in the various schools, hobby classes, arts and craft, etc., all these efforts are directed to supplement the education of children so that they might absorb influences which would generally contribute to the development of character, discipline and culture in children.

**Child in Need of Special Care.**—The country seems to have taken notice of children who have come in conflict with law much earlier. There have been orphanages and a few thousand children are being looked after in these institutions. A big number of neglected, exploited children and children without proper guardianship are lying untouched. Those who came in conflict with law are not uniformly dealt with. There are Children Acts in quite a few States of India. Some of them are not enforced at all and some are partially implemented and sometimes only in certain districts of a State. Some States have juvenile courts, remand homes, certified schools, etc. A few other States have reformatory schools and borstal schools. There are some areas where none

of these facilities exists. All children who came in conflict with law or who have other emotional and behaviour difficulties are not taken notice of as mentioned earlier. A large number of children are admonished and discharged with fines, cuts, etc. In the absence of any suitable machinery, namely services and agencies, it is necessary to have legislation in all the centrally administered areas. Necessary machinery would have to be set up to take care of children who are socially handicapped, neglected, exploited or victimised or have come in conflict with law or are without proper guardianship. The legislative provisions will have to be followed by adequately trained personnel and necessary provision of finances.

**Welfare of Children.**—The blind, the deaf and dumb, the orthopaedically handicapped, the mentally retarded and the mentally deficient have for them a few institutions organized and run by Government and voluntary agencies. Even in this group India is having millions of children and the services are meagre. It is, however, felt that these numbers can be reduced considerably by preventive measures. The institutions in this area need to be strengthened and used as pilot centres and experimental stations. It would take decades before every handicapped child will be able to receive some attention. As most of the handicapped children are in the families (and it is not an easy job to rear a handicapped child), the tensions in the family and its effects on the economic activity of the family and the mental health are bound to be very bad.

Services could be developed and initiated with a view to helping the parents and guardians to look after such children better. Such action will at least minimise the difficulties of the family. Services for treating diseases commonly prevalent among children, school health services, mid-day meals, child guidance clinics, etc., also are needed in larger numbers. It has been said earlier that a beginning has been made even in these areas; but still much remains to be done.

It is not known how much money the country is spending directly on the welfare of children. This is partly due to the com-

posite nature of the programmes and partly it is due to the administrative pattern we have inherited from a colonial government which did not follow any rational basis for placing a service in a particular department or for making the provisions under a particular budget head. This is a field for research. The country has to sort out its services, co-ordinate and consolidate them so that the picture becomes clearer. The grants-in-aid programmes in the field of children, as in the field of social welfare, need to be reviewed and put on a proper footing. The report of the Committee appointed by the Central Social Welfare Board on this subject may be able to give a lead for action in the coming few months. The money spent by the voluntary agencies, grants given by the government at various levels, the allocations made by the various trusts and charities and the foreign aid received for the programmes affecting children need to be assessed and properly used.

It seems that with an intelligent and integrated approach even the funds available would bring in high standards of the existing child care work in the country. The schools of social work and various other institutions are training or orientating personnel, working for children, directly at the field level or indirectly in supervisory capacities. The training programmes for workers with children need to be reviewed, standardized and strengthened and the service conditions of the workers need to be better regulated.

To prevent exploitation of the needy children by institutions and agencies, the Licensing of Children's and Women's Institutions Act needs to be enforced immediately. The administrative personnel dealing with matters affecting children directly or indirectly is finding it difficult to cope with child welfare programmes which have become so extensive and so much specialised.

**Co-ordination of Agencies.**—Another important area which needs immediate attention is that of co-ordination to develop the collective self of the few thousand agencies serving children and provision for necessary machinery for its effective functioning at the regional and national level is very important. Almost all the agencies have been doing direct work at the field level. They have

been inadequately and ineffectively dealing with the aspects of their work which can be dealt with more effectively at the regional and national level through a co-ordinating agency. The tendency of the national organizations to be indifferent to the importance of the functions which legitimately belong to them, by the very definition of their work and to convert themselves into field work agencies or to become agents or sub-agents of the grant giving organizations is deplorable. The voluntary character of agencies in the field of child welfare as in the field of social welfare is in danger. There is a crisis of leadership. The objective of social or welfare work is no longer distribution of patronage or doing charity to the poor or the less fortunate. It is a matter of providing equal opportunities to all.

**Finances.**—It is no longer possible to raise funds and get a big sum from the few. In the changed times through small contributions from big numbers, big sums will have to be raised. The work of planning and developing programmes and of finding resources and implementing the programmes has to be undertaken by specially trained persons with ability to comprehend and meet new situations with a fresh and courageous approach. We are at the crossroads. At this hour the existing work needs to be consolidated in keeping with the changing times, positive, promotive, preventive and curative programmes need to be properly balanced. They need to be fitted into a total perspective of India's economic and social development. The work done by the Central Social Welfare Board, Community Development Departments, various local and national voluntary agencies needs to be reviewed and implemented as parts of an organic whole. The Third Five-Year Plan, it seems, will show a certain amount of clarity in relation to the child welfare work that will be done in our country. The possibilities seem to be that we shall break new grounds and in the coming ten years, we might be able to fulfil to a certain extent the directives in our Constitution in relation to children.



## CHAPTER

## 10

### *Youth Welfare in India*

L. S. KUDCHEDKAR, M.A.

IN the field of social welfare in India, youth welfare has assumed importance in recent years since Independence. There has been a keen awareness, both at the Governmental level and at the general public level, of the great responsibility for welfare and social progress of the young in our country. This widespread consciousness of youth welfare as a special duty of the adult generation towards youth is a recent phenomenon in India and augurs well for the future.

**Youth Welfare, a New Concept.**—The concept of youth service as a part of social welfare is of recent origin both in India and abroad. In the nineteenth century, the problems of women and children attracted attention and efforts at social reform were directed to their amelioration, to the neglect of youth. Pioneers of social work and social reform in India concentrated their attention on the status of woman, on the crucial importance of the mother on whom depended the stability of the family as a social institution, and on those women, such as widows, who had been denied a self-respecting position in society. In the industrialized countries of the West the exploitation of child labour in factories led to an increasing concern for the protection and proper upbringing of the child. Although at a later stage youth work was undertaken on a limited scale in schools and colleges as well as in young people's clubs and organizations, there was until recently no systematic and organized action at a national level by government or private agencies. Perhaps it was taken for granted in the



past that the young would take care of themselves and in the transition from childhood to adulthood no attempt was made to guide them nor was there any awareness of the peculiar problems of adolescence which created a need for such guidance. That the process of growing up required considerable emotional and social adjustment was not clearly understood or appreciated.

**The Needs and Problems of Youth.**—What are the needs which youth welfare services seek to fulfil? Let us at the outset accept the definition of the youth as the adolescent and young adult of the age group 14 to 25 years. Some such criterion is a necessary preliminary to further discussion. Of all the stages of human growth this period calls for the greatest sympathy and understanding because of the manifold changes taking place in the human personality during its rapid development from childhood to adulthood. It is a period of physiological change and of the building up of sufficient physical strength and stamina for the struggle of adult existence. It is also a time for the acquisition of knowledge and skills according to aptitude and ability. Most significant of all are the emotional strains and stresses on the young on account of the physiological changes taking place within and the new demands from the world without, from the family, the educational institutions, the employer as well as society at large.

In ancient India the role of the young was to acquire the knowledge and the skills of the family occupations in accordance with the existing social structure of Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Sudras. There was no question of individual aptitudes and interests and the growing youth naturally imbibed the traditions prevailing in his family of service to the community in which he had a clearly defined place awaiting him. His place within the family was likewise clearly defined, as the relative positions of the male and female members of the household and of the old and the young were rigidly adhered to.

The youth of today has to grow to maturity in an infinitely more difficult world. The break-up of the old social system as well as of the joint family have deprived him of the old feeling of belonging when he knew clearly what was expected of him.

With increasing industrialization and urbanisation large numbers of our youth congregate in cities, often away from their families and thus, problems of youth in urban areas have become more acute. There is a lack of opportunity in the villages which has caused wholesale migration of young people to the cities in search of education and employment. But in the cities as well young people are confronted with the same lack of opportunity. Large-scale unemployment prevails and the type of employment available is generally not such as can award satisfaction. Housing conditions are deplorable and the young grow up in an ugly, noisy, dirty environment, harmful both to body and mind. Few facilities exist for the creative and healthy use of leisure. All this leads to general indiscipline among students and working youth alike.

Another factor which contributes to frustration and anti-social attitudes is the absence of any coherent system of values to replace the old certainties and beliefs. An ethical code based on religion is no longer acceptable to many minds but no clearly defined alternative has been evolved. As a result a sense of drift and purposelessness is evident even among the children of well-to-do families who are assured of employment and a reasonable standard of living. The changing ideas of morality have led to greater latitude in the mixing of young men and women, boys and girls. The education and economic independence of women has also contributed to this. But our young people are not used to this new freedom and problems often arise in the relation between the two sexes.

The natural idealism and enthusiasm of youth receives a shock when it encounters corruption and dishonesty rampant in public life today. It is no wonder that the young either model themselves on their elders or, on the contrary, develop an attitude of disrespect and rebelliousness towards them. In any case a desire for recognition and status is part of the adolescent's mentality, and when he is called upon to accept the advice and authority of elders, many of whom fail signally to practise what they preach, his resentment may lead to defiance and irresponsibility.

Finally, it is possible that the fear of a third world war may

also influence the attitude of our youth. On the whole, we in India seem to lead our lives as if nuclear weapons had never been invented. But with the more educated sections, alive to what is going on in the world, the threat of war may, as with youth in the West, produce a feeling of futility and helplessness and such an awareness may be yet another cause which destroys emotional tranquillity.

The problems of youth in our country, therefore, are such that schemes for youth welfare alone cannot go far in solving them. Fundamental need is that of security; while unemployment and the fear of unemployment remains, indiscipline and irresponsibility will also remain. It is also essential that adults at all levels in management and administration be scrupulous in the observance of moral standards. If working youth, that is, young adults rather than adolescents have a certain amount of authority and responsibility delegated to them, it will lead on their part to an increased loyalty and sense of responsibility. And if efforts at vocational guidance and the provision of technical training are to bear fruit, some kind of parity in salary and social status among different occupations will have to be established. Provided some attention is given to these larger questions, services specifically aiming at youth welfare have a manifold and useful function to fulfil. Activities which bring young people together and encourage each to give of his best can do much to inculcate a sense of success and a sense of commitment which together may ensure emotional stability and security.

**Youth Welfare Services in India Today.**—Since the advent of freedom our Government has shown an active interest in youth welfare and several new youth activities and organizations have been started for the general well-being of young people. Both the Union Ministry of Education and Departments of Education and Social Welfare at the State level have concerned themselves with this question and it is gratifying to note that steady progress is being made in different schemes including youth leadership training camps, students' study tours and non-student youth clubs and centres. It is proposed to establish a comprehensive National Youth

Centre in Delhi to provide recreational facilities. The Ministry of Education, Government of India, has appointed a committee on co-ordination and integration of physical education, recreation and youth welfare programmes under the chairmanship of Pandit H. N. Kunzru, M.P. to examine the various schemes and evaluate the respective merits of different activities from the point of view of character and discipline among Indian youth.

The rural youth who was totally neglected in the past is now being cared for by the community development movement which aims at altering the social scene in the villages. The rural primary school which currently also serves as a community centre and youth club meets some of his educational and social needs. The rural higher institutes located in several parts of rural India benefit the young people from villages who wish to take rural service as a career. The basic village institutions, such as the *panchayat* and the co-operative society also afford considerable scope for youth leadership. Rural arts and crafts training facilities exist to help the village youth to earn his livelihood. Welfare work among young women and girls is a special responsibility of the Central Social Welfare Board and a voluntary organization, the Kasturba Gandhi Memorial Trust, has also taken a leading part in this sphere.

The problems of urban youth have tended to receive more attention from welfare agencies. To meet the need for residential accommodation bodies such as the Young Women's Christian Association run hostels for working girls. The Y.W.C.A., the Y.M.C.A. and many other associations provide opportunities for games, recreation and social activities. Some of these unfortunately restrict their membership to people from a particular community; others without intending to be restrictive, but catering to the needs of a certain locality, also find their membership limited to a particular linguistic or communal group. Youth service naturally forms part of the programme of community centres run by official and private agencies. Great emphasis is laid on physical fitness and the All India Sports Council is expanding the scope of its work. Gymnasia, stadia and open air playgrounds are being provided

and the prime importance of physical fitness and freedom from disease is recognised. Sight seeing and study tours are organized with facilities provided by the railways and young people from low-income groups have opportunities for holidays which their parents' generation never knew. Youth festivals, which encourage the pursuit of arts like music, dance and drama and bring about social contacts and understanding, have also been organized. Unfortunately, they have been on too massive a scale and have become so unwieldy that it is better to reorganize them on a manageable scale in future.

The Bharat Scouts and Guides as well as the Auxiliary Cadet Corps and the National Cadet Corps seek to train youth for leadership by increasing their efficiency, initiative and resourcefulness through the assignment of responsible duties. The National Discipline Scheme aims at instilling in the younger generation a sense of tolerance, self-sacrifice and self-reliance, and at inculcating a spirit of patriotism and good citizenship. According to the latest report of the Ministry of Education, since its commencement during the Second Plan period, roughly 20 per cent of school leavers have gone through the National Discipline Scheme Training, and a great demand for the introduction of the scheme is coming from all over India. But owing to the availability of a limited number of instructors at present, the demand cannot be adequately met.

Student welfare naturally forms a very important part of youth welfare. Here also progress has been made, particularly in the direction of scholarships and loans for poor students. There has been an increasing emphasis on vocational guidance and counselling and there are career masters in schools to guide and advise pupils regarding their future occupations and their prospects and preparation. It is not enough, however, to find out a student's abilities and give him information regarding training facilities available. If at the end of it employment opportunities do not exist or if the type of job for which he qualifies has a much smaller salary or less social prestige than others, there is bound to be a scramble for university places by people unsuited to a university education. This naturally results in student indiscipline and lowering of univer-

sity standards and is one of the cases in which one cannot tackle student or youth problems successfully without other issues being involved. Many educational institutions have extra-curricular activities in which students participate. It is noticeable, however, that students neglect the more intellectual and serious pursuits and indulge only in socials, picnics and cheap entertainment such as films, jazz and rock 'n' roll.

During the past few years, bodies like the Bharat Sewak Samaj and the Bharat Yuwak Samaj as well as colleges and universities have organized labour and social service camps whereby students and urban youth in particular may serve the country. But the planning of these camps has been found to be defective and they do not seem in many cases to have served their purpose adequately, with the result that the Study Team on Social Welfare and Welfare of the Backward Classes has recommended their discontinuance. Now the latest scheme is that of National Service for all school leavers before they enter jobs or continue their education. In Western countries National Service has been clearly understood to mean military training and military service. The new Indian scheme however has mixed objectives, including social service and national reconstruction, the fostering of discipline and a recognition of the dignity of manual labour, as well as military preparedness in the event of a national emergency. In the period of a year's training the planners hope to settle the problems of indiscipline, prepare the youth for leadership and make up the deficiencies of the present educational system. In short, the ambitious scheme of National Service is expected to act as a panacea for all the ills of modern youth and eradicate the causes of the country's maladies and the unrest among young people. Organizationally and administratively it is a gigantic project involving an enormous expenditure. The sponsors should surely take due warning from the failure of many other large-scale schemes, such as Youth Festivals and the Social Services Camps. It is one more illustration of our love for the grandiose, when the same money spent on small-scale schemes of Youth service and improvements

in school and college education, would perhaps yield far better results.

**Suggestions Regarding Extension of Youth Services.**—There is obviously scope for the extension of already existing facilities for youth welfare in our country. In addition to these, certain other types of activities, very popular in the West and just beginning to find a place in India, may be mentioned. The international youth hostel movement is one of these. It affords opportunities for cheap holidays, hiking, cycling, of touring and for meeting the youth of other countries, thus broadening the outlook of young people and enriching their experience. In some European countries the hostels are very comfortable, in others conditions of living are more rigorous. A certain element of self-service is always present; all inmates help in cleaning up and they may, if they choose, cook their own meals. Young people thereby learn to rough it out and endure discomfort and get to relish a simple open-air life. The youth hostel discipline also implies obedience to some fundamental rules of corporate living and consideration for the comfort of fellow hostellers.

Such a movement is just afoot in India and it will take time to gather momentum for more than one reason. We do not at present possess suitable premises for youth hostels in India and some *ad hoc* arrangements made so far in co-operation with educational institutions and Government dak bungalows are not really satisfactory. Besides, inclement climate is not too favourable for travel on foot or by bicycle and the distances involved are far too great to be covered in this way. It should, however, be possible to select certain areas outstanding in natural beauty, such as the region of the Western Ghats, and construct a series of hostels within that area at a convenient distance for hikers. Greater reliance on tinned food, as in the West, would also facilitate youth hostel living.

In rural areas, organizations such as Young Farmers' Clubs and 4-H Clubs (Head, Hand, Heart, and Health) should be encouraged. In Britain, there is a net-work of these covering the whole country-side. There are Youth Advisers appointed for

special activities, such as drama, music, physical culture and arts and crafts and they make their advisory services available to youth groups scattered in different villages in a district. Sometimes they help in forming new youth groups and clubs and strengthen the activities of the existing clubs.

As far as student activities are concerned, it is necessary to develop corporate life and democratic values by encouraging students to plan their own programmes and by entrusting them with full responsibility. This may be done in students' unions, associations and common mess clubs in student hostels. An unfortunate feature of student activities in India has been the prevalence of cliques, factional rivalries and struggles for power. If political parties could be persuaded to keep out of student organizations and if these bodies devoted themselves to welfare and other constructive activities, a healthy student movement could develop in India. An organization that does concern itself with such constructive activities is the World University Service. There is scope for others also in the direction of library facilities, health centres, student tours, seminars (not enormous conferences) on student problems as well as, drama, film or art societies, hikers' clubs and social service units.

One neglected aspect of youth welfare in India is the provision of sex education and guidance in problems related to sex. There has been a traditional taboo on this subject in Indian society and even today few boys and girls of the adolescent age get any scientific information from parents or teachers. It is left to their friends to educate them or misleading information is acquired from the secret reading of unhealthy books. There is therefore an urgent need for two things,—scientific information on the subject and the inculcation of a balanced attitude to sex. Schools can introduce the subject in an unobtrusive manner as part of the study of the human body. There should be no separate periods for sex education; it should be an aspect of physiology and hygiene. It has even been suggested that the pre-adolescent stage is the right one for introducing the subject and children can, when learning about the reproductive system of animals, absorb the knowledge without self-consciousness



or embarrassment. Boys and girls even in mixed schools should be separately taught and documentary films may be used. The inculcation of a balanced attitude is equally important and probably more difficult. Very much here depends on the parents and the environment. Schools can help by arranging discussions on aspects of the relation between men and women either directly or in the course of teachings such other subjects as literature where these questions arise. For slightly older boys and girls, the establishment of mixed youth clubs is desirable where healthy friendships between the opposite sexes can be built up on the basis of shared interests and common activities.

Youth clubs have also an important role to play in bringing together youth from different socio-economic strata, language groups and religious communities. Apart from their other useful functions in providing leisure time activities, youth clubs can also help in breaking down barriers and this should be borne in mind when founding new clubs. Indeed, in all youth organizations every effort should be made to see that young people from rural or urban backgrounds, from rich or poor, educated or uneducated families and from different parts of the country find some common ground on which to meet and work together. In Europe during the Second World War, the national emergency acted as a great leveller and young people belonging to all kinds of backgrounds lived and worked together irrespective of class or creed. Youth work in India, though specifically directed towards youth welfare, should also keep in view such an ideal of social and emotional integration among the young people of our country.

## CHAPTER

# 11

### *Family Welfare*

FRENY R. GANDHI, M.A. (CHICAGO)

THE family is an institution as old as human species. The historical background of the family is quite complex and it has gone through many changes. Families are not born in Heaven but they are the products of evolution. In the age of Aristotle and Plato it was recognized that family is the fundamental influence over human life and even in those times there was an effort to preserve the family. It has been the goal of every society to become a better society and every society is the reflection of its families.

We find evidence from the history of the world that there were social reforms and social justice in different reigns of Kings and Queens, and we know from this history how they were interested and not interested in their people. There was a universal concern about the people. There were benevolent and religious minded, generous and wealthy rulers who were more concerned about their poor people and their sufferings, and social work began where there was poverty.

The West had the good fortune of making advances in the field of welfare because of their economic and political advantages. The seeds of family welfare are in the history of charity organizations. In England before 1860, the local authorities administered the different charity funds which were meant for poverty ailments, maintenance of widows with children, the custodial care of the aged, the insane and the orphans, etc. The method of giving help was very unscientific and the 'good' got the gains and the 'bad' were bowled out and there was little recognition of the needs of human beings. There was more attention given to the adults than the children. Now there is a greater recognition of child welfare

but there is very little recognition of Family Welfare Services. With the advent of education and social reforms there was a cry for 'organized charities'. The people became gradually concerned about the woeful inadequacies and wastage of human resources, and the method of making the 'poor' the Pauper of the Society by giving them alms was criticised. The few courageous leaders in their wisdom decided to co-ordinate the different societies who worked independently and they established the London Charity Organization in 1869 in London, which is responsible for all the scientific developments in the field of welfare. The United States of America made rapid advances and the first Family Service came into existence in 1911. The Relief Societies were co-ordinated and the United Societies formed a federation called the National Association of Societies which is now known as the Family Service Association of America. These societies provided 'direct services' to the families with the help of social workers who were then known as 'charity workers'. With the advances in the field of education, psychology and medicine, the social workers started to realize the effects of poverty, living conditions, unemployment and the diseases, on human personalities and the first seminar was organized by social workers to discuss the problem of different conditions and its effect on personalities. These types of discussions gradually resulted in the establishment of the first school of social work in New York in 1904. Gradually, there was a universal spread of training in scientific methods of helping the children and their families and the field of child welfare is incomplete if the child's family is neglected.

In our country we have a great number of religions and charity trusts and we have the greatest scope to develop our welfare services but there has not been any co-ordination. In the former Bombay State alone there were 52,000 trusts and one can imagine the dangers and the greatest wastage of our wealth resources for their independent functioning. These charity trusts can be put to the greatest use for the benefit of the families of each community separately and to look into their total needs of family living which includes health needs, education and vocational needs, etc. In

Bombay, the Parsi Charity Organization Society came into existence in 1919 with the object to co-ordinate Parsi Charities and it undertook case work investigation. In 1946 the Society introduced case work services with the help of a trained staff and formed the Liaison Committee for Organization of Parsi Charities and it is now a multi-purpose welfare agency and it renders all types of social services to the Parsi families on a professional level. In 1950 with the co-operative effort of the Tata Institute of Social Sciences and the Indian Conference of Social Work, the first Family Welfare Agency came into existence not as a result of any charity organization but as a result of recognition of case work services to the families for their various difficulties and maladjustments.

The term, family welfare is misunderstood as the welfare services for the women and children but it really means the welfare of the whole family and the men cannot be excluded. There is a fundamental unity between the individual, family and society and to preserve and promote this unity we need scientific family services for the welfare of the whole family. Family welfare is one of the widest fields of social services because it covers all types of family services from the period of infancy to the period of old age and these services are needed in all economic groups of people, of any society irrespective of their differences in relation and culture. It is the observation and experience of family social workers that one case does not have one problem but it has many problems and all of them are interrelated to one another, so each case needs a careful diagnosis and treatment not of one but of many problems in the individual and his family. The committee of the Family Service Association of America has defined the purpose of the Family Service Agency as "to contribute to harmonious family interrelationship, to strengthen the positive values in family life and to promote healthy personality development and satisfactory social functioning of various members." This is a challenge to the family social workers to make happy families so that there is a normal and satisfactory functioning of each individual in his own family but the task is too big to be achieved by the family social workers alone. The family social workers need

the help and support of all other professional persons like doctors, lawyers, economists, sociologists, psychologists, psychiatrists and educationists, and religious leaders, etc., to build up a healthy and happy family life. Families are not manufactured in the factories but they are the products of heredity and environment.

**Problems of Family Life and Problem Families.**—The problems of family life are countless and the experience of each individual of his family life is fathomless and it is this total experience which makes or breaks the individual. For every one of us, whether rich or poor, educated or uneducated, social or unsocial, life is a continuous process of solving problems and there is no family life without physical, mental, emotional or social problems but all families are not problem families. People are complex and their lives are woven into different designs with different colours. An architect would design a house but each individual designs his own life, depending upon the opportunities and deprivations in his childhood and young age; the design of each life is different and one cannot copy or trace the design of anyone's life. However, we have set cultural, social and family patterns of life in which we live and weave our designs. The economic, social and psychological structure of our family is changing and will change faster with the advent of industrialization and mass progress in education. Today we have vast problems of poverty, ill health, mass ignorance but it is not the job of a family social worker to eradicate these problems from the families whose cases come to the agencies for help, but the family social worker gives her tremendous contribution to the individual and his family by helping him to face the situations realistically and help him towards his immediate needs with the help of community resources and continue to help him to build up his inner strength to face the difficulties of life till such time as he or she needs it. In this helping process there are enormous difficulties because even the basic economic needs of our people are not met, and then where is the question of the best opportunities in one's life? It is necessary for the Government to take care of the basic needs of our people so that to some extent our stability of family

life is preserved. The result of the two Five-Year Plans has shown a definite progress of the country, but 20 per cent increase in capital income is not at all sufficient to meet the minimum needs of our people. There is no percentage shown anywhere to mark or note the happiness of family life. On the contrary there is a psychological depression among the people because of the rise in prices of each commodity. Health and education are very expensive programmes for our poor country; there are more deprivations than opportunities resulting in disturbances in work and family life. The opportunities lead to security and happiness, while deprivations lead to insecurity and unhappiness.

**Family and Money.**—Is money a problem in a family? It is a problem in a family but it is not always so. Money has a very close relationship with the family life. It has a deep personal meaning to every individual because without it the physical life cannot be maintained. Often we take it for granted that there are conflicts in the family over monetary difficulties. This is also true but not always. We must understand that there are feelings and attitudes towards money which are responsible for creating problems of poverty, unemployment, marital conflict, debts and arrears of bills, maladjustments in marital or family life. Our experience tells us that there are high expenses and little income in our families and there is a constant burden of maintaining large families. At the same time there is a problem of poor planning of the budget and the lack of education and vocational training for those who could be employed. Because of our hard economic and social conditions our families need help in budgeting the income and in developing the best of their maximum potentialities for a stable family life. We are all aware of the wastage of wealth, food, clothing, etc., at the time of marriage, death and other religious ceremonies. The enormity of these expenses leads to heavy debts which are left as legacies in the event of sudden deaths. The so-called modern civilization has demanded changes in these customs and traditions but it has created fashionable ways at the same time of spending the income. This also involves a severe and real economic problem of buying today and paying

tomorrow. All these indicate the attitudes towards the use and value of money in our family living. The habits of spending money. The attitudes towards the use and value of money are important and significant and they speak of the personalities and their problems. All our problems in relation to money in a family need to be diagnosed carefully for its thoughtful planning and treatment.

Money is no substitute for family happiness. We find some of the poorest families quite contented and normally happy, while the rich families with all their wealth and comforts are very unhappy. Happiness or unhappiness of family life is created by external and internal factors. External factors are mostly in the environment and the internal factors are associated with personality conflicts. Cases mostly come to the family service agencies for help in environmental difficulties, but each client's personality speaks of his inner conflicts. The problems that come to the agencies are mostly of economic difficulties, unemployment, very poor living conditions, ill health, marital and family conflicts, etc., and it is these major problems which reveal other problems like delinquency, personality maladjustments and disorders, separated family life, poor parent-child relationships, desertions and divorces, superstitions and rigid attitudes of the elder members of the family, torture of the in-laws, extremely poor upbringing of the children and several other problems. The client comes with one problem but he has a chain of problems behind a major problem which he thinks is the burning problem and he is helped to understand the totality of his difficulties and how best he can come out with the help of case work service. All these problems mentioned above create unhappy family life which results gradually in family breakdown and this breakdown is costly to any society. By breakdown we do not mean desertion or divorce, but we mean the 'breakdown' in which there is no normal functioning of family life. If a man breaks a leg in an accident, he is rushed to a hospital and the doctor is qualified to amputate his leg after a diagnosis and careful thinking, but who will help the man with hurt feelings? Is he aware that his feelings are hurt, and that something is

'abnormal' in his life? Where and how would he seek the help? He invariably does nothing and his hurt feelings lead to a broken life which may lead to all sorts of breakdowns and this family then becomes a problem family and then (after wasting enough time) we want to help him. If we wait till the family's problems turn into problem families, we will have to pay a very high price for the delay and the dangers, and the results of our efforts to help them will be very poor because they are almost incorrigible.

Problem families are those families which are in difficulties of all types and their attitudes are such that they lead to other complicated and more difficult problems like psychopathic personalities, complete neglect of children, adolescents and adults with severe personality disorders, etc., and these problems may remain untreated. These families are on the whole unco-operative. They do not respond to treatment. They are at times of low intelligence, poor character and personalities and gradually life proves to be too great a burden for them and they become indifferent to their failures and disappointments and are incapable of using the services which are rendered to them. Problem families and families with severe problems need specialised services and we need to take the help of the specialists like doctors, lawyers, psychiatrists to handle their problems, and we use different community resources to help the clients for their various needs. Unfortunately, our community resources are so woefully inadequate that we get stuck in our cases and they remain half-treated or untreated. Two problem families may present quite the same types of problems but both are to be treated differently because in each family there is a different pattern of life with different personalities and there are different reactions to different situations. Hence we have to study each family individually and work out a plan of treatment that is most beneficial to that particular family. As the best remedy for family problems and problem families we have to have a very early detection of the problems, and timely scientific help is the most effective treatment. In problem families, it is advisable to take care of growing children as soon as possible and work out a plan for a normal and happy living by removing them to foster



homes or to institutions if necessary. In our country foster care is not practised but relative care can be explored, keeping in mind all necessary factors desirable for the child's growth and development of his personality in that home which is not his own home.

Economic, social and emotional stresses in family life are universal, but it is possible that in lower income groups the effects of these stresses are quite severe and this is quite threatening to the integrity of a family life. Our family life moves in a cycle and it has different stages and at each stage there are problems which need attention. These stages are: (1) infancy and childhood; (2) adolescence and youth in which period, work-life sets in; marriage takes place and the individuals begin to show their strength and weakness; (3) adulthood and parenthood in which period there are greater responsibilities because the family has expanded; (4) old age gradually sets in and there are problems of losing normal vigour, being dependent upon married children who in turn have their own families and they do not know how to support their own children as well as the aged members. Thus one family dies and another survives. In this way the cycle of family life moves on and one has to find happiness in his total living of a family life. In this whole life, the individual needs constructive experiences which develop the growth of the individual. It is only when his basic needs of love, security and attention are met along with his physical needs in his infancy and childhood and he gets normal opportunities in his adolescent period that an individual achieves normal strength and he becomes capable of facing the difficulties which are to come in the period of youth and adulthood. The time to prepare our healthy children is in healthy marital and family life and the time to prepare a healthy youth is in the period of his childhood and adolescence and the time to prepare for old age is in the period of youth and adulthood. At every stage there are few accidents which we escape or do not escape. To prevent these accidents we have to help our families to live well and make them conscious of family life and this can be better done at the adolescent stage. We have no

statistics to show whether our (young) marriages have troubles or not. There are millions of marriages which are not happy marriages but they do not break off so easily in our culture because it is their 'prestige' to keep up their marital status, but the children are quick to sense tensions of their parents and it would be advisable if these parents take marriage counselling, which is a service specially rendered by marriage or family counsellors who have to be very careful and tactful in handling two personalities and not one. Marital discord is made up of many elements. It is wrong to generalise that match marriages are happy or unhappy. Marriage is a matter of great adjustment and this certainly depends upon the individual's personality which again depends upon the growth and development of the individual in his own family life. Our present marriages lack preparation and understanding which result in frustration and disappointments.

Family service agencies make use of different techniques of social work. Two decades ago family case work was the method of dealing with the individual problems but now the other techniques are also used to help the families in trouble. They are group-work techniques, community organization techniques and research techniques and these techniques are introduced because the emphasis is shifting from treatment to prevention. The most recent highlights in the field of family welfare are family life education programmes which actually came into existence in organized forms only in 1951 in the U.S.A.

The Family Case Work Programme is greatly strengthened in the U.S.A. and through research, social workers have proved how case work techniques help the individuals to face their troubles. A well-trained family case worker helps the client to mobilise his feelings in the direction of change, growth and adaptation to reality. Family life education programme is not a substitute for case work treatment but it is an educational (and practical) process which produces therapeutic benefits for the participants of the group and it is a service for maintaining family life. The social worker should be trained not only in the dynamics of human behaviour but should also be trained in group dynamics of human

behaviour. "The aim of Family Life Education programmes is the prevention of unhappy family relationships and the strengthening and enrichment of family life." It is a process of helping people through different types of group educational activities. The family service agency also has the responsibility of improving the general social conditions of making the public aware of the different welfare services needed for its families, of taking a leading part in developing services like adoption, foster care, institutional care, vocational guidance, etc., and of giving its best contribution to the development of all types of community resources so that the families can be helped to use the necessary resources. Research will help us to evaluate the professional services and accordingly we have to modify our techniques of work in view of the existing needs of our families.

**Scope of Family Services in our Country.**—One of the most important characteristics of all life is change, and a human life is a long process of 'readjustments to changing situations'. Our country is in its development stage and it is just the time to save our marriages and families and we should have a well integrated programme of social services and thereby make the family life strong enough to enable the individual members to withstand the burden of our times. We should strive that each member in the family gets his basic physical and emotional requirements and opportunities for a normal growth of the individual for his health, education and welfare. The Government and the private organizations should provide financial assistance, medical and educational facilities for the rehabilitation of the families. As a preventive measure to save our marriages we need to develop marriage counselling services which are a long process of help right from the adolescent age to adulthood, including education in sex, preparations for marital life and parenthood and helping the young couples to play their important and significant roles in the upbringing of a new family. We should promote family life education programmes.

It would not be so easy at this stage to start family service agencies throughout the country but we cannot afford to waste

time in watching and waiting. We need action and it would be worth an attempt to make the best of the existing resources in initiating the family services. These resources are Health Centres, Maternity and Child Welfare Centres, parents' groups of the schools, youth clubs, schools, university students' unions, Boy Scouts and Girl Guides Associations, Workers' Organizations, Y.M.C.As and Y.W.C.As, family planning centres, etc. With the help of the schools of social work the leaders of these organizations can be orientated in the family services (by short-term courses and seminars) so that there comes the consciousness of the need to preserve a healthy and happy family life. These organizations will not be suitable to give specialised service to individuals and families but they will at least refer the family to the right source for the specialized service before it is too late.

The State Social Welfare Board with the help of private organizations should start family counselling units with a trained professional person so that she can give case work help to the individuals in the families and also promote family life education programmes to suit the needs of families. The State and the private organizations should have scholarship programmes for training in professional education for those who cannot afford but are genuinely capable of doing the job.

Family welfare is a team venture and it is high time we awakened our other professional friends; lawyers, doctors, teachers, religious leaders, untrained social workers, and others who are also connected closely with families to take care of the families jointly. We have to reach our families to detect the problems in early life and the school is the easiest and the best source. With the co-operation of the educationists we can make a joint effort to help our children and their families who have problems. The teacher has no time nor is she qualified to handle a problem child but the school worker can help the child. The school social worker's training should include individual and group dynamics of human behaviour because she will be giving individualised help to parents and children and through formation of parents-teachers association she can combine school and family life together and

help the children and parents to enjoy and understand one another. The greatest and the best time of our life is spent in our school career and during this time if a troubled individual gets scientific help, he or she will be an asset to the family and the society rather than a liability. The schools of social work should use schools as field work units so that gradually the educationists will appreciate and recognise the programme of school social service. We also expect to get good co-operation of the educationists, and the parents who are now becoming education-conscious for their children are likely to accept advice and specialized help. The parents will understand that their children are not the only problem children but all children have their problems and they need timely aid in their family and school life.

There is also a possibility of starting private family welfare units where parents of better economic class can pay for the specialized services. The payment of fees has a psychological significance and there are clients who feel better about receiving service on payment. However, we have to be most careful that private family welfare services are not given by quack family case workers, otherwise we will be creating more problem families. Private family welfare units should work under a professional supervision.

At present, we have foreign literature in the professional field of family welfare and it is very necessary to have some of the translations of these publications in different regional languages so that our social workers are better equipped with the knowledge of different techniques of case work help. It is equally necessary to encourage experienced social workers to conduct research projects and publish their findings in regional languages so that we are more aware of our families and their problems and devise ways and means of helping our families. Unfortunately, our economists, sociologists, educationists, doctors and lawyers who are our closest professional friends are unaware of the techniques of social work in the field of family welfare and we need better interpretation. The family social workers are unheard of and unrecognized professional persons but this is no disappointment at all. Our task is to prepare our families of 'today' for the world of 'tomorrow'.

## CHAPTER

# 12

### *Family Planning— A Social Responsibility*

(Mrs.) SUSHILA S. GORE

FAMILY planning is one of the most important new discoveries whose potential benefits are enormous in the interest of the human race, and, especially, in progressive evolutionary processes that build up advanced society and nations. Such discoveries have to be understood by the promoters and passed on and shared by the people. If family planning meets many needs of the peoples in varying conditions and situations, it can be accepted. It goes without saying that (1) family planning controls the present rate of the growth of population; (2) family planning acts as an aid to under-developed countries to raise the economic, educational and normal human standards of living among the majority of the people; (3) family planning acts as a means to improve human quality; (4) family planning is an aid to achieve happiness in marriage and enjoy enlightened parenthood; (5) family planning is a dynamic aid for medical and social change in a country like India which is facing urgent and important problems on each and every front; (6) family planning is an aid to create children who are wanted, loved and cherished.

In a series of five-year plans, among health services of the country, family planning has been given a priority. The results of the targets laid down during each plan can only be appreciated if people can enjoy and share some of the achievements which may have a direct impact on their daily living. In order to attain the targets, the rate of production of goods should be accelerated. If the people's economic, food and educational standards are to be raised, the growth of population should be checked. Today in

India the situation is quite different. Although production has been most encouraging, it has not brought relief. Owing to a large increase in the population of the country, developing economy and added resources have failed to provide benefits to the needy.

(1) For a successful social change, progressive impoverishment of the population should be checked.

(2) Unless and until the aimless and economically delirious multiplication of human numbers is checked by a dynamic drive, the standard of living of the majority cannot be improved in the near future.

(3) Those who are helped to survive must also be provided with the means for living. The World Health Organization very rightly states in its reports that it would seem scarcely justifiable to undertake measures to ensure that more children will live unless we make efforts at the same time to ensure that their life is worth living.

Shortage of food continues as the needs of the additional population have to be provided for. Imports of food cannot be the answer for meeting the needs of the population of any country as a permanent measure. India has to become self-sufficient.

Per capita calorie consumption in 1947-48 and 1950-51 was 1,690 and 1,640 calories respectively, while the expected normal requirement should be between 2,600 and 3,000 calories a day.

Sufficiency can only be possible if the rate of population growth and is brought under control during the next two decades.

Hunger and deprivations among the majority is a great incentive which encourages unstinted efforts towards industrial development and increasing production at every level. But people do not realize that reproductive controls are equally urgent; sex hunger is a biological and emotional need for man's existence. He can only relate it to his other needs if he understands the 'why' and 'how' of doing it. Reactions have some significance resulting in his acceptance. The natural needs cannot be thwarted, but the understanding of the fact that voluntary parenthood as a reality will enable more and more people to lead an enlightened marital life.

People have been found willing to support any measure which helps to increase production, and the Government takes full responsibility for it, but the people are inclined to be lethargic when the question of implementing the population policy arises. Considerable efforts have to be made to enlist public support and create public interest. Nothing can be achieved unless the people try to be co-operative and the Government intensifies its efforts in reaching the set goal.

Introduction of family planning as a new reform or a new way of life requires complete change in behavioural patterns. It is a social responsibility as much as a medical one. Social workers must offer unstinted efforts in creating the climate for understanding and accepting this new way of life in the interest of the family and the country.

In most of the countries where they have been able to maintain a high standard of living and sustained national economy, responsible parenthood among a large population is obvious. The educated majority are always seeking new ways to improve their own situation. Though voluntary parenthood has never been a national programme in most of the highly developed countries of the West, yet it has taken root fairly rapidly, because it has been accepted by the people through their understanding of their own responsibilities.

The only reasonable way, therefore, is to get the people to understand the need for family planning and thus, to help to lower the birth rate in the country. They have to be helped to accept the scientific methods of birth control, which have been tested and found effective for over five decades in the highly developed countries of the West.

The population problem has crept in slowly and silently upon us. It has imposed an important challenge to human existence. It is not known how it came into being and what effects it has had on the individual and the nation. Discontent and frustrations in human existence have been caused by ignorance or lack of knowledge of their causes, as well as the means for controlling them.

It is important to understand clearly that the growth of popu-



lation cannot be attributed to the abnormal rate of fertility in India, but to the impact of effective measures to control the death rate. Improved water supply, public health programmes, sanitation and health services have lowered the death rate from approximately 48 per 1000 in 1911-21 to about 27 in 1941-51. The birth rate, however, remained stationary. India today is indicating a very wide fluctuation in the death rate over a fairly short period of time. The only way for stabilising this stupendous increase is through controlled birth rate.

In a vast population any change in the birth or death rate will proportionately affect its population. The present medical services in the entire country, however inadequate they might appear to be, has rapidly reduced the death rate, while birth rate has remained practically stable. The rate of population increase which is about five million or more per year will become 682 million in 1981 if reproductive control does not bear fruit. It is, therefore, of utmost importance that family planning must become a major programme of the medical and social welfare departments.

Undoubtedly, efforts to save life must continue as an essential human need, but those who are helped must have an opportunity to survive. Therefore, family planning strengthens these humanitarian efforts and introduces a new way of life. It offers to the parents a way to plan births to achieve a standard of life they desire to maintain or attain, even more for the sake of their children than for themselves. A planned family gives security to the child as well as to the parents. In turn, it will help to build up a progressively sound and enlightened society.

The most important aspect of family planning programme today that concerns those who are responsible for its implementation is to understand ways to disseminate this information to the millions of illiterate and widely spread out rural population. It requires skill and knowledge in the use of scientific methods for such communication, in order to reach the millions belonging to different educational standards, cultural backgrounds, economic and social status, etc. It also requires to inform and instruct them that children can be conceived by choice and not by chance. They

must become conscious of the fact that increasing survival rate brings about an added responsibility for providing for their needs. Chances of survival have increased and those who survive must have the means to live as human beings.

For awakening this understanding amongst the people, the responsibility rests with those who are concerned with people's welfare. Family planning is a means and not an end in itself. It complements many other equally important plans that are designed towards peace and contented living. The physician looks upon the health of man as a complete state of physical, mental and social well-being. But services must be provided to assist man to receive help at each of these levels, so that he may become an integrated, happy and healthy human being.

To achieve this, it must necessarily mean co-ordinating and integrating the work of physicians, public health workers, trained social workers, social reformers, teachers, welfare workers, community development workers and leaders of the community. Every individual, who understands its implications, must become an active participant in the programme and as a preacher he must communicate the message as widely as possible. Thus, a network of action which starts from merely giving of information will lead to motivating the people for accepting the idea and eventually the services also.

Paucity of trained personnel and pressure of work on such persons further demand that a practical approach may be undertaken to combine effectively the medical and social services for better and more rapid achievements in the field of action programme.

The Tata Institute of Social Sciences has recognized the need for active participation in this programme and has made compulsory a two-month training course at the Government of India Family Planning Training and Research Centre, Bombay to a group specializing in Family and Child welfare. It would be very useful if all other groups could also have this advantage, so that they could become active participants in promoting family planning through their specific responsibility, whether as a labour wel-

fare officer, child guidance worker, or a social worker.

Family planning scientifically introduced strengthens the foundation for a happy family life. It must be introduced as a war-time emergency. It must be a war against hunger, unwanted children, impoverishment and perpetuating poverty. Too many people increase unsocial activities. Human values get reduced. Hungry millions become a challenge to democracy. To create a new civilization in freedom means active participation of the people. The nation must outline a programme that can bring about a definite result without taking away the right of the individual for self-determination.

The population policy must become a concern of every person. Every medium of communication must be utilised to disseminate knowledge and provide adequate services for all. Large scale contraceptives must be made available to the millions. It is a continuous process. The effectiveness depends on regularity of use which is based on established motivation in those who accept it.

Social scientists will find family planning a dynamic aid in assisting all the people irrespective of status, caste or creed. It is a method that will help people to help themselves to achieve their cherished ideals.

## CHAPTER

# 13

### *Labour Welfare*

M. V. MOORTHY, Ph.D.

BEFORE dealing with labour welfare it is necessary to define what welfare is; for labour welfare is only an extension and application to the labouring population, of the concept of welfare. After defining welfare, we shall proceed to examine the reasons for planning for labour welfare, the scope of such welfare, and the governing principles of labour welfare administration; and finally, the work done in the field by the three well-known agencies concerned, i.e., the State, the employers and the labour unions. Incidentally, we shall discuss the position of the labour welfare officer on whom devolves the function of inspiring and implementing the various programmes of labour welfare.

**Definition.**—Welfare implies a desirable state of existence or living of an individual or a group—desirable from the point of view of the resources of a community at a given time and in the light of the community's heritage and future goals, that is, of social purposes. The main emphasis in the concept of welfare is on the state of living.

Welfare defines a state of well-being of an individual or of a group. Well-being refers to conditions of living in relation to their effects of the physical, mental, emotional and moral health of the group or the individual. In the measure that one's conditions of existence or living promote these aspects of one's health, one may be described to be enjoying a state of welfare or well-being. Physical, mental, emotional and moral health are the four corner stones of the foundation of welfare. And these aspects of health are basically related to such conditions of living as food, clothing shelter, education, etc. Further, an individual never exists in isola-

tion. His total health and well-being are closely interlinked with the health and well-being of his family, and of the community in which he is born and lives. It is inconceivable that a man can enjoy physical, mental, emotional and moral health when any of his closely related members of the family are suffering in any way; and similarly, a family cannot enjoy welfare or a state of well-being for any length of time if the community in which its life is cast is devoid of conditions that make for its welfare. We are, therefore, justified in stating that welfare is a cumulative and total concept that could be realized in the three dimensional and related spheres of the individual, the family and the community.

**Need for Welfare.**—The need for labour welfare lies in the fact that industrial workers today constitute functionally a very significant and important element of the country's population. Their labour helps to dig and haul coal from the bowels of the earth; to fetch and refine oil, to build dams and reservoirs: to lay pipes, canals, lines and roads. Their labour creates and transmits power; and through various phases of manufacture, it patterns raw materials into finished products of necessity as well as of luxury. We are getting so much accustomed to multifarious and manifold amenities characteristic of modern ways of living and thinking, whether in the context of the farm or the factory, house or the council hall, whether in travel, at work or at rest, that a continuation of our civilization appears to depend on the labours of workers. If we withdraw the activities of labour from the various spheres in which they are engaged, we would perhaps plunge back into the barbaric state in which average life was poor, nasty, brutish and short. Civilized life, as it is today, is possible on account of the co-ordinated labour of millions of workers working in factories and workshops and other industrial workplaces. Functionally, we say, therefore, that industrial workers play a very useful and important role in the community.

Looking then, to their functional importance, it behoves the community to provide for the welfare of the workers; for workers can work better, more productively and efficiently only if they are maintained in good and healthy conditions. The maintenance of

the health of the workers in all its aspects, for better production and also thus, the development of better citizens is the *raison d'être* of welfare philosophy and programmes.

Further, workers suffer from various handicaps both in their work life and in their community life, and the removal of these handicaps is a part of the function of labour welfare. Work in a modern factory is not an easy job. It imposes on the workers stresses and strains, physical, mental and emotional. In factories and workshops the workers are called upon to work with precision instruments and machines of huge size and intricate complexity. Rolling belts, revolving wheels, advancing beams and descending blades make life hazardous. Further, heat, noise, dust, gases, fumes, glare, odours, vibrations—depending on what is manufactured enhance the dangers of work. Repetitive work, characteristic of most of the modern industrial operations, generates boredom and monotony resulting in fatigue and ennui. In the mines too, work is of a very strenuous nature, especially underground where daylight is unknown, while on the surface labourers have to work in the strong heat of the sun. While thus, workplaces present their hazards and impose handicaps, the living places of workers bring fresh hardships. Workers belong to low income groups and they have a tendency to cluster round their factories. They become victims of rapacious landlords and come to inhabit single-room tenements and jerry built structures, constructed especially to cater to them with low rent, little light and ventilation and with no sanitary amenities. Sometimes these too, are beyond the means of workers and consequently, three to four families arrange to dwell together in tenements of the size of 10 feet by 12 feet. Deprived of ordinary conveniences and privacy, workers are often subjected to subhuman conditions of living. Slums are thus a common feature of our industrial civilization.

A large percentage of our workers are illiterate. They do not have an appreciation of the arts of life which makes for a liberal outlook and an intelligent understanding of individual, familial or social problems. Ages of superstition and tradition, formalism and fatalism breed in them generally a narrow and lethargic attitude.

Added to these lack of planned recreational facilities drives them to seek cheap sensation in gambling, alcoholism and prostitution during the periods of the little leisure they have. It is clear that manhood cannot develop to its full stature in such conditions of living; nor can labour fulfil effectively its productive role. Therefore, welfare administration becomes necessary, in the first instance, to meet and counteract the handicaps to which workers are exposed both in their work life and in their folklife; and further to provide opportunities and facilities for the harmonious development of the worker's personalities. Labour welfare has thus a positive and dynamic function to fulfil.

**Scope of Welfare.**—The scope of labour welfare work not only covers the worklife of the worker in the factory but also extends beyond into his life with his family and the community. Indeed, welfare work in the factory is but a part of the welfare programme. For, what the worker does in the community, how far away he lives from the factory, what companions he has, what recreations he takes to, and where and how his family life is organized, the conveniences or inconveniences at home—these, among many other subtle forces, affect his work. For instance, a worker who lives quite far away from his factory has to get up early and cover the distance in order to be in time. If he walks long distances as many do, it does fatigue him early. If he gambles or otherwise debauches himself or stays in slums which do not allow sound sleep and rest, he cannot be efficient at work. If his food is poor and personal and environmental hygiene is neglected, as often they are, the worker becomes a prey to frequent spells of illness and this increases the incidence of absenteeism in the factory. Similarly too, accidents could be traced to the worker's preoccupations with problems which arise in his family or the community. When a worker enters the factory he does not merely bring with him his two hands and so many heat units of energy. He brings with him a live personality, throbbing with aspirations and anxieties, a personality full of ideas and impressions, feelings and attitudes. Hence it becomes very important that welfare programmes, if they have to succeed, should take into account the worker's total personality

and its development. It is this fact which makes of welfare a comprehensive and continuous programme, beginning with the factory and related to and culminating in the labour community development. Indeed, welfare work outside the factory is of the nature of follow up service to what has been planned within the workplace.

Admitting then, that welfare work, to be effective, should include the worklife, family life and community life of the worker in a well related, co-ordinated and purposeful pattern, what are the details of the items and activities to be covered by welfare? An elaborate discussion of the items of welfare would take volumes and it is beyond the purview of our present discussion. An indication of the relevant fields of activity could alone be attempted here. A welfare officer with proper appreciation of the objectives of labour welfare and a creative vision can easily add to the items listed here or make suitable modifications to suit the types and needs of workplace and community situations.

**Inside Workplace:—**

(1) *Safety*: Education; guards on the machine; equipments to be used by workers and fire-fighting.

(2) *Health and Hygiene*: (a) preventive health education; (b) safety first; (c) medical assistance; (d) removal of dust, fumes, gases, smoke, etc. (e) workroom sanitation; (f) spittoons. (Incentive prize for best kept department).

(3) *Amenities and Conveniences*: (a) sitting and rest-rooms; (b) washing facilities; (c) cloak room; (d) drinking water; and (e) lavatories and urinals.

(4) *Creche*: health and nourishment of, and play for children of working mothers, and rest; education of mothers in child care should not be neglected. Annual baby shows may be organized.

(5) *Canteen*: It can be of two types: (a) regular; and (b) mobile tea canteen. Education of workers in food habits is essential.

(6) *Co-operatives*: (a) consumers' co-operatives; (b) credit co-operatives; (c) emergency relief fund; and (d) thrift and savings drive (fund).

(7) *Recreation*: (a) indoor games during rest-time; (b) play



in nearby premises—badminton; volley ball; *hutoo-too*, etc.

(8) *Education*: (a) Reading-room and library; (b) adult literacy; (c) workers' education; and (d) technical training programme.

(9) *Counselling*: (a) family visits by social workers; (b) preparation of case records; and (c) counselling services for the individual and family.

(10) *Research and Publications*: (a) study of accidents; (b) workers' attitudes and behaviour in above situations; (c) publication of posters, welfare bulletins; (e.g., nutrition, family planning and *annual welfare report*).

**Outside the Workplace.**—(a) housing; (b) environmental hygiene and sanitation; (c) transport; (d) health; positive and preventive steps, hospital and dispensary, maternity services; (e) recreation: child, youth, adult and women welfare centres; gymnasium; games and sports; hobbies; dramas and music; craft and social education; (f) education; schools, parks; play-grounds, museum; exhibitions; (g) co-operatives and marketing and other services, such as laundering, hair dressing, etc. (h) roads maintenance and lighting; (i) communications; post and telephone services; (j) watch and ward; (k) counselling and mental health services; (l) research.

**Objectives of Welfare.**—As pointed out earlier, the above is only an indicative list of welfare items, touching the worker in his workplace and including his family life in the community. Items in both fields should be appropriately related in order to obtain effective results of proper efficiency and well-rounded development of the workers. For instance, maintenance of the physical health of the worker is necessary for proper and continuous production. Energy, enthusiasm, attendance at work, endurance and resistance to disease depend on health. And health in turn depends on the type of work a person does, the food he eats, his habits, the sanitation of his dwelling place and so on. Clearly in the interest of the worker's health, the workplace should be clean and precautions should be taken against dust, fumes, high temperature, etc. Otherwise not only will work and production suffer but the life

of the worker in the family and the community is bound to be adversely affected. Further, a provision of a good canteen to ensure the workers nutritious food is imperative. But if an employee works in a clean environment, and is provided with nutritious meal facilities at the work place, and goes back after work to live in a dingy, insanitary slum and eats unhygienic, unbalanced and innutritious food, clearly the objective of providing a healthy working environment and food is not fulfilled. Indeed, his way of life after working hours—most of which he is a victim—neutralises the effects of welfare work in the factories. Similarly, the creche should be provided in a factory where fifty working mothers are engaged so that their babies could be cared for during the mothers' worktime. Here the rules of the Factories Act require elaborate care of the children under the supervision of qualified personnel. Usually, good food, clean clothing, rest, scientific recreation and education are planned for in the creches. But in the evening, the children are put back in their old clothes and the mothers take them again to the slums, where living is characterised by dirt, poor food and clothing, lack of recreation and facilities for rest. The contrast of living in the happy surrounding of the creche and living in the bad environment of the home creates bad effects on the tender and impressionable minds of the children. It will be worthwhile to study and investigate the effects of the dual way of living.

Anyhow these aspects of welfare today constitute a pathetic feature of labour welfare work. But these facts reinforce the argument that labour welfare should be a complete and comprehensive programme embracing the worklife and home life of the workers.

**Principles of Welfare.**—Indeed, a large part of the failure of welfare work is due to welfare being planned and treated on a piecemeal basis. Simultaneous and comprehensive programmes do cost money and need personnel. Therefore, management is satisfied with introducing only a few items which are forced upon them by law. Since this type of work does not yield results, the employers do not have any faith in welfare work. Further, the workers for whom welfare work is planned feel the unreality of isolated and

unrelated programmes and, consequently, accept the activities without confidence and enthusiasm. Working in such melancholy circumstances the labour welfare officer is saddled with onerous duties which do not legitimately belong to him and this further becomes a contributory cause of the failure of much of labour welfare work.

The welfare officer who has a clear concept of welfare and has a clear perception of the purpose of welfare is able to co-ordinate the purposeful and related activities. Such a person would thus appreciate that the canteen in the factory is organized not merely for the immediate purpose of providing wholesome food to the employees but for the bigger and continuing purpose of creating in them good and scientific food habits and imparting to them knowledge of dietetics so necessary to their physical and mental health. Again, a welfare officer with vision could understand that the creche is not merely intended to take care of the babies of working mothers but for the greater objective of inculcating in the mothers the value and the way of child care. Similarly, sports, hobbies and other educational activities and programmes could be utilised for the continuous and harmonious development of the worker in his work, home and community contexts.

Another important principle of welfare administration is "work with the individual". Welfare programmes aimed at the workers or for the workers have little chance of success as long as they are not conceived and implemented in consultation and collaboration with the workers. They should be made to feel that the programmes or activities are a part of their own creation, that their practice is a voluntary, spontaneous and willed process emerging from themselves. Thus, only welfare work will be beyond suspicion. This implies that workers should be taken into confidence, consulted at various stages regarding the programmes and their implementation. Again, the principle of responsibility is another which will make for the success of welfare work. According to this, there should be delegation of authority in the welfare fields either by election to committees or by nomination. Such are safety committee, sports committee and canteen committee which work

simultaneously in specific areas for limited periods. Here it should be mentioned that responsibility should carry with it authority; and authority in turn should possess resources both personnel and financial. Responsibility will succeed only in the measure that it is combined with authority and resources. One of the ways of kindling primary leadership is to create resources, give authority and make persons, committees or groups responsible. And primary leadership properly created results in an overall feeling of belonging in the members of the group.

**Review of Welfare Work.**—A few observations in regard to the work done by several agencies to secure the welfare of workers could be made. From about the middle of the nineteenth century when factories were started in India upto 1881 when the first factories act was passed, unregulated and long hours of work, night work for children and women, bad working conditions, lack of sanitary amenities, mounting accidents, very low wages, and slum living characterised the life of the workers. The Factories Act of 1881 and subsequent amendments to it led to some improvement in working conditions. But this was a very slow process due to several prejudices on the part of the then Government and the employers. But the Factories Act of 1948 and a few subsequent amendments have introduced salutary changes in the working conditions in factories; and created an Inspectorate which is responsible for supervision of factories and enforcement of welfare regulations. The Act imposes several obligations on employers for the maintenance of safety and sanitation of the workplace, in addition to regulating hours of work and forbidding night work for women and children. It further provides for sanitary facilities, such as lavatories and urinals, and amenities like cool drinking water, rest-rooms and cloak-rooms, the canteen, the creches, etc. The Mines Act, more or less, follows the pattern of the Factories Act.

A beginning has been made in the direction of the social security of the workers. The Minimum Wages Act empowers the States to take steps for fixing minimum wages in sweated occupations. The Employees' Provident Fund Act provides for a con-

tributory provident fund, the employee's contribution being six and a quarter per cent. Steps are being taken to increase this contributory amount. The Employees' State Insurance Act offers to workers five types of benefits: (1) the sickness benefit which is a cash amount to sick workers payable upto 56 days in a year; (2) the medical benefit which is of the type of free medical treatment, and this is available in certain States to members of the family workers too; (3) the maternity benefit; (4) the disability benefit; and (5) the dependant's benefit in case of death of the worker due to work injury. This scheme is a tripartite contributory one, the workers, the employers and the State contributing their share towards the services for their expenses. The earlier Workmen's Compensation Act operates in places where the Employees' State Insurance Act has not yet been extended. The Employees' State Insurance Scheme providing for the above mentioned five benefits is described to be the biggest in the East. It could be observed that there is yet no unemployment benefit in our country and that workers are left to shift for themselves during periods when they are out of work. This is largely true. But the Industrial Disputes Act provides a small compensation to the worker for a few days (45 days) when he is laid off. In case he is retrenched from service he is entitled to one month's notice and for about half a month's wages for every year of his past service. Further, employment exchanges and training schools do assist the workers in a very small way to secure placements in gainful occupations.

This is only an outline of the steps taken by the state to introduce welfare measures in the workplaces and to provide some measure of social security to workers. But has anything been done to secure the worker's welfare in the community setting? Yes, the State, especially after independence, was seized with the conviction that welfare work to be effective should embrace also the family and community life of the workers. Accordingly, the Union and the State Governments have constructed several hundreds of tenements of various types available to industrial employees. Top priority is given to the construction of houses for workers in the schemes of welfare. Maharashtra, Mysore, West Bengal, the

Punjab, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh are amongst some of the states who have already built tenements for workers to reasonably good specifications. Also employers and trade unions and workers' co-operative societies are encouraged to build houses for workers by assistance being given to them either in the form of residential land, loans, grants, etc., and many management groups and some unions and co-operative societies have taken advantage of these facilities.

Again, the State Governments have built welfare centres in workers' neighbourhoods in industrial cities. In these centres, health and family planning services, social education programmes, recreational activities, craft education, and such other items are planned for the behoof of the workers. These centres cater to the welfare needs of women and children of workers. For the last two years, the Union Government in collaboration with State Governments has undertaken the training of teachers, and education of workers who, in their turn, train teachers to teach workers. The whole programme of workers' education is geared to the creation of a healthy and scientific trade-union development in our country as also to the awakening of citizenship knowledge amongst the workers.

Thus, from working conditions to minimum wages, and from social security to housing and workers' education, the lot of the workers is being improved by State measures. Though the steps taken by the State towards securing labour welfare are considerable, yet only a fringe of the problem has been touched; and much still remains to be done.

**Welfare by Employers.**—While employers are making relevant adjustments in the workplaces for the welfare of their workers, their attempts to plan for welfare in the family and community settings are not yet satisfactory for welfare work in the community, such as housing a thousand or six thousand employees is a very costly process. For building houses for workers inevitably culminates in community development with all its attendant services and maintenance equipment and personnel. Clearly such welfare work is beyond the resources and capacity of small

employers. But larger and more progressive employers of labour have developed labour communities with necessary services. The Tatanagar growing out of the iron and steel factory at Jamshedpur is a colossal and excellent example in this regard. The Batanagar of the Bata shoe company near Calcutta is a good instance of labour community development by employers. Amongst other notable ones could be mentioned Godrej Nagar in Bombay; National Rayon Corporatnon's housing colony at Kalyan; and labour community building activities of the Birlas, the Dalmias, the Buckingham and Carnatic Group Mills.

**Welfare Work by Unions.**—It has been already mentioned that welfare programmes, whether within the factory or outside, have little chance of success unless the workers actively participate in them. The Factories Act provides for the co-operation of workers in such activities as safety, and the canteen. Consequently, several factories have organized safety committees, canteen committees, house keeping committees and so on. But with the exception of a few, the participation of the workers in welfare programmes is poor and unsatisfactory. This may be attributed to the illiteracy of the workers' traditional behaviour patterns, lack of leadership on the part of welfare personnel and want of encouragement from the management. The trade unions, too, have taken very little interest in the welfare of the workers at the workplace and workers' living places. This is because the unions in India are preoccupied with industrial disputes, political rivalries, and leadership problems. Moreover, the funds of the union are too meagre to admit of any expense on account of the welfare of workers. However, the Textile Labour Association of Ahmedabad is an outstanding and creditable exception; and the participation in welfare activities in and outside the workplace so far as the members of this Association are concerned, constitute a cheerful chapter of labour welfare by unions. The Association runs numerous community services through enthusiastic and energetic personnel; and it has adequate equipment for the purpose. The Association has housing programmes, hospitals and dispensaries, maternity wards, schools and hostels, playgrounds and banks and

co-operatives. In our country the Ahmedabad Textile Labour Association is described to be a model in the field of labour welfare work.

**Training for Welfare Work.**—From this brief account it could be seen that labour welfare work is a comprehensive field needing the services of properly trained personnel. It calls for people who have a knowledge of the needs of individuals in their workplaces, of families and communities. Persons who can work in such fields should be those with creative vision, who can plan programmes with reference to objectives, and implement them at primary levels. They should be able to inspire leadership and secure the participation of individuals and groups, amongst the groups they are required to work. Especially in the factory, they should be able to overcome the prejudices of employers, and dissolve the differences amongst workers and engage them to the common goals of efficient production and adequate personality development. This is, indeed, a dynamic role requiring a social philosophy and social technique consistent not only with the culture of our times but also with the vision of a new India we are building.

In order to equip welfare officers for playing their role, several institutes have organized elaborate courses of training consisting of theoretical knowledge in various branches of the humanities and practical work in the factories and in the labour communities. Many of these are postgraduate two-year training programmes while one or two are one-year programmes. Some are of a few months' duration only. These institutes and training programmes, some of which are independent, while some are under the auspices of Universities, are of differing levels and standards. But, it could be observed, that the need for training in the welfare field is widely appreciated; and there is a definite trend towards providing such training.

**Position of the Welfare Officer.**—The position of the labour welfare officer in industry now remains to be discussed. The Factories Act, 1948, requires the appointment of labour welfare officers in factories employing five hundred or more workers, and according to further Rules, for every two thousand additional



workers, one additional welfare officer is to be appointed. It is stated that a welfare officer, to be eligible, should have obtained a degree or diploma in social sciences from any institution recognized by the State Government in this behalf. The welfare officer is appointed and paid by the employer and, therefore, works under him and can be removed by him, though in some cases only by the approval of the Commissioner of Labour. The welfare officer is saddled with about fourteen duties which include functions purely belonging to the industrial relations field, such as grievance settlement, works committees, and settlement of disputes, and functions appropriate to the personnel management area like administration of leave, supervisory training, production committees, etc. The labour welfare officer is theoretically given the position and status equal to the head of a department in the factory. In many factories the functions of labour officers who are really personnel officers and those of the welfare officers are combined and the officer is designated labour and welfare officer or personnel and welfare officer. As such he is required to attend to recruitment of employees, their induction, transfers, promotions, wage and incentive schemes, T.W.I. programmes, discipline maintenance, collective bargaining and a host of other similar functions. Sometimes these officers advise on retrenchment and also conduct inquiries following charge-sheeting of workers for misconduct. They attend Labour and Industrial courts and Tribunals; and either personally appear on behalf of the employer in proceedings against the workers or help other representatives to do so. Yet the welfare officer is described to take up a neutral position in industry. But by recent rules the Factory Inspector is given powers to prevent the welfare officer from doing work prejudicial to the interests of the workers. However, this unfortunate position of the welfare officer brings him and his welfare work into great disrepute. He not only cannot function efficiently but becomes a victim of suspicion and distrust from both sides: employers and workers. Indeed, the workers in several instances quite wrongly attribute their frustrations to the welfare officers. Instances are not wanting where in the cases of disciplinary action and such

other delicate contexts, fanatical workers have even murdered welfare officers.

It is difficult to make categorical suggestions for the improvement of the position of the labour welfare officer. It would perhaps be best and would certainly conduce to more efficient welfare administration, if the industrial relations and personnel management functions are separated from the purely welfare function; and the welfare officer allowed to keep to his own special field. Welfare functions are a part of personnel functions; and within the workplace at least; the welfare officer should work with the personnel officer. Welfare activities outside the workplace, such as housing administration, recreation, medical assistance and workers' education are legitimately beyond the purview of purely personnel functions, though they certainly have their bearing and influence on the behaviour and efficiency of the worker in the workplace. The welfare officer is, indeed, an employee of the management; and he has a definite role to play in making the life of the worker happy and comfortable in the factory as well as outside.

Every job, including that of the welfare officer, has its own hazards. But if the welfare functions are properly demarcated and assigned to the welfare officer, he need fear no distrust from workers. The management, of course, have to recognize and accept the useful role of the welfare officer. A properly trained labour welfare officer with dynamic qualities of leadership could be trusted to enlist the sympathies and services of the employer, in the noble work of developing human personality in work situations and in the contexts of the home and the community.



## CHAPTER

# 14

### *Women's Welfare*

Mrs. M. M. DESAI, M.S.S.W. (COLUMBIA)

"To awaken the people it is the woman who must be awakened. Once she is on the move the family moves, the village moves, the nation moves."

—*Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru*

HISTORY of women welfare movement in India and the world is a constant reminder of the above statement. Women are the gate keepers of the family, and through it the nation. It may be easy to theorise on revolutions and counter revolutions, but neither can take roots, if they fail to stir women folk. Men are often considered as the builders of civilization but it is the women who continue the 'creative work of God', and the very nature of their being lends it the stability, continuity and repose. Whenever this fundamental relationship between man, and the Universe is forgotten, the human civilization degenerates, giving rise to unhappiness and unrest. Many of the women welfare movements have roots in these conditions, and the Indian civilization is no exception.

**Women and Social Change.**—The path travelled by Indian women to gain their rightful place in contemporary society has been neither easy nor straight. Thousands of years of customs and traditions have moulded their life and made them what they are today. Their transition to the modern status of equality and freedom may seem rapid and even sudden. And yet it cannot uproot them completely from the foundations. It is essential, therefore, to have a correct perspective of their life through the centuries gone by. Only then it would be possible to assess their true position in the present day world, and develop welfare programmes geared to their needs, aspirations and capabilities.

It is interesting to note that the changes brought about in the life of Indian women are more representative of a struggle between the forces of conservatism and liberalism rather than a conflict between the two sexes, resulting in the feminist revolt as witnessed in many of the Western countries. This aspect of women welfare movement in India has tremendous significance in understanding their position and the contributions they can make. Duality of these conflicting forces are again and again expressed in the typical views about Indian women, the one representing her as an embodiment of the highest traditional feminine virtues of purity, faithfulness and complete devotion to her husband and the family, as symbolised in the myths and legends of Sitas and Padminis; while the other representing her as a symbol of suppression, subordination and passivity. These viewpoints are true to a certain extent, but fail to give a correct picture of Indian womanhood.

**Women in Ancient Period.**—Many misconceptions prevail about the status of Indian women and the role they had played in the olden times. This is primarily attributed to the ignorance of the original Sanskrit texts, both *Śruti*s and *Smṛiti*s which contain the laws and customs governing roles and responsibilities of women. The most original and authoritative text is *Rigveda*. It is the primary root from which all the later developments of Hinduism have emerged.

The ancient period could be roughly divided into three parts: (1) *Vedic*, 2500 to 1500 B.C.; (2) *Samhitās*, *Brahmanas* and *Upanishads*, 1500 to 500 B.C.; (3) *Sūtras* *Epics* and early *Smṛitis*, 500 B.C. to A.D. 500. The first two periods covered the invasions, conquests and consolidation by the Aryans of the new land. Women enjoyed considerable privileges and freedom in the family and public life during this age. They remained active contributing members of the society, tilling land, weaving clothes, making war weapons and keeping the family community life going. Hence they could not be treated with an 'air of patronage' or contempt. The wife was not an impediment but an absolute necessity in performing the social and religious rites and continuing the family and its traditions. As the Aryans came in small numbers, large families

were desired. In a patriarchal society like that of the Aryans, though the birth of a son would be welcomed, birth of a girl was never a source of anxiety and unhappiness to the family. Some thinkers even emphasised that a talented and cultured daughter would be an asset.

The need for women's participation in religious rites raised the age of marriage to sixteen or seventeen. Consequently, freedom in the choice of marriage partners by girls could not be denied to them. *Niyoga* and divorce were allowed. Thus, women were valued as equal partners in carrying life's burden, in fulfilling obligations to family, gods and ancestors, and revered as mothers, who created much desired new life. By 500 B.C., the Aryan rule became an established fact. Conquest of indigenous population and their loose incorporation in the then existing structure of the Aryan society created a fourth class called Sudras with a semi-servile status. The general deterioration in the position of women was brought about by inter-marriages of Aryan men with non-Aryan women and insistence by some of them that non-Aryan wives should participate in religious and social rituals. The growing complexity of the vedic rituals was also an additional factor. Discarding of *Upanayana* ceremony, initiating girls to religious education, lowered the age of marriage to the extent that the age of *Upanayana* ceremony which took place around the age of nine or ten was considered as the ideal age for marriage of girls. Consequently, it was a religious rather than a secular necessity to have a son in the family. Girls could have no choice of a partner in marriage at such an early age. *Niyoga* and widow marriages were dropped after about A.D. 500.

**Women in Middle Period.**—The period from the invasion of Mohamed of Ghor to the establishment of British rule in the second half of the eighteenth century brought further deterioration in the life of Indian women. The socio-economic and political conditions remained unsettled for nearly 300 years. Floods of invasions brought in its wake gradual breakdown of traditional social institutions, vast migration of people and political as well as the economic dislocations. All these affected the status of women.

However, the position of women in the South did not show much change, because throughout this period the conditions had not changed considerably.

This brief analysis of social changes which affected the life of women in India during the Ancient and early Medieval periods clearly shows the importance of constantly assessing the position of women against the socio-economic, and political conditions in a society and the importance of using them as a background in evolving any change in their life. It also reveals that during the past 2000 years, an average Indian woman continued to lead a comparatively happy and contented life. She was adored by parents, cherished by husbands and revered by children. However, her happiness was frequently marred by some of the growing social evils, such as the practice of child marriage, polygamy, *sati*, etc. On the other hand many of these practices touched a section of the population, belonging to what was then considered as *Kulin* families. For example, seclusion of women or the system of *Purdah* was not at all common among the cultivating classes, wherein men and women had to work side by side. Similarly, the system of *sati* was unknown in South India. Again, child marriages so common among Brahmins in the North was practically unknown among Nambudri Brahmins of Kerala and Kashmir and Kshatriya families. The legal position of Hindu women, particularly with reference to inheritance was quite unsatisfactory even where the doctrine of *Stridhana* was liberally interpreted, as under some schools of Hindu law. Women were generally excluded from inheriting property. This led to their complete economic dependence on man and hence emotional dependence as well. The only relieving feature was the joint family system which considerably mitigated the effects of many of the traditional customs. In spite of the deteriorating conditions of women, the family remained their domain in many respects. Weakness of Indian womanhood during the period arose mainly from the fact that there was no machinery like organized public opinion to stimulate essential social reforms. Consequently, social customs tended to stagnate. This process was further accelerated by the

breakdown of stable government resulting from the decline of Mughal power.

**Women in Contemporary Period.**—The advent of British rule ushered in an entirely new phase. Their policy of non-interference in religious and social matters, combined with economic exploitation of the people and introduction of their type of education (to create a class of people to help in perpetuating their domination) released two opposing forces. It disintegrated the basic rural economy, thereby contributing to poverty and destitution on a mass scale. Particularly, it affected those women whose major source of income was from agriculture and cottage industries. A slow exposure through education to the ideals of Rationalism, Liberty, and Equality as propagated in their own land, deeply stirred a few intellectuals who could not but help pioneering the cause of women as part of their efforts for social rejuvenation. Names of stalwarts like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Justice Ranade, Swami Vivekanand, Margaret Cousins and many others have been associated with this reform movement during the pioneering days. In the background was the work of foreign missionaries, whose zeal and dedication in removing social disabilities created some misgivings.

Socio-religious movements resulting in the establishment of Arya Samaj, Brahmo Samaj, etc., gave further impetus to this awakening. In 1917, the Indian Women's Organization, the first of its kind was founded in Madras by Mrs. Margaret Cousins under the leadership of Mrs. Annie Besant to fight for the rights of women and to improve their socio-economic conditions. Later it became a model for many organizations of this type. However, it was really Gandhiji's deep faith in Indian women, his vision and practical sense that gave them the opportunity to reach new heights, particularly, during the freedom movement. Political emancipation became a byword for social emancipation. These socio-religious and political movements had far-reaching repercussions in many directions. For example, the early reforms, such as the Prevention of Sati Act of 1829, Widow Remarriage Act of 1856, Child Marriage Act of 1929, etc., have had roots in these early movements. And



yet the impact of these acts was never felt very strongly by the common people as they reflected the efforts of a few enlightened intellectuals rather than general social consciousness.

India's Independence in 1947 and adoption of a new constitution in 1950 gave women equal rights with men to vote, to stand for elections and to hold public offices. This changed the political status of women which has brought in new responsibilities giving added impetus to women's organizations. While some concentrated their efforts on such aspects of woman's life as removal of social disabilities, educational and vocational training, creating consciousness about their rights and responsibilities and helping them to adjust to a fast changing family and community life ushered in by the rapid process of industrialization and urbanisation, the others seemed to cover all the aspects of women's life, social, economic, cultural and political. These organizations not only endeavoured to create consciousness among the general mass of Indian womanhood but also provided excellent opportunities for constructive leadership to women of vision and courage. Their contribution to pioneering the cause of women and to stimulating an enlightened approach to the problems of women cannot be denied. And yet their very structure, programmes and objectives need constant and objective evaluations if the danger of their becoming instruments of power of an elite few is to be avoided. The political and legal status given to women, through the provisions of the constitution and subsequent legislations, will remain on paper only unless more and more women are drawn into active participation in planning and implementing programmes of these organizations, through a dynamic approach.

A realistic co-ordination of the programmes and services offered by these organizations need hardly be emphasised. This is important at national as well as state and local levels. Their further co-ordination with government effort is yet another aspect which requires careful consideration. This calls for a certain level of emotional maturity, vision and identification with the national goals on the part of the organizers. If this is lacking the tendency of each organization to live in its own narrow world will not be checked.

Development of any programme requires a clear perspective of the problems it seeks to solve. Hence a brief analysis of some of the problems of women at this stage may provide a realistic background to consider the programme and services developed to solve them and the gaps caused by unmet needs.

**Problems of Women in Contemporary Indian Society.**—Indian women have to face two types of problems: (1) those which they face in their homes; and (2) those outside their homes. Problems do crop up when they are deprived of their normal home life on account of socio-economic, cultural and personality factors.

The problems confronted by them in their own homes are: (1) Problems of education; (2) Problems of health; and (3) Problems which are created by combination of home, work and increasing community participation. The primary objectives of any welfare programme for women should be to strengthen their life in their own homes and make them efficient wives, enlightened mothers and active contributing members of the community. Its ultimate goal is to enable them to lead a richer and fuller life within the community.

**Education.**—It is interesting to note that the Report of the University Education Commission appointed in 1948 has emphasised that while “the greatest profession of woman is and will probably continue to be that of a home-maker, yet her world should not be limited to that relationship” only. Further, the National Committee on Women’s Education in its comprehensive Report of 1958 on Women’s Education, particularly, at the primary, middle and secondary stages, observed that on the basis of 1956-57 statistics, only 34.7 per cent of girls in the age group 6-11 go to schools as against 73.8 per cent of boys in the same age group. As the age level rises the proportion of girls to boys taking advantage of educational facilities tends to show marked decline, though, as compared to earlier years, the rate of girls making use of educational opportunities has no doubt increased. The problem, therefore, is to create such socio-economic and cultural conditions as would facilitate increasing participation of girls and women in educational programmes that are offered. The need for developing a sound

vocational guidance and training facilities for girls after the age of eleven is equally essential. This is particularly important because after this age girls seem to find it difficult to participate in formal educational programmes offered in schools. Such programmes should aim at making them active members of the community, rather than allow them to contract marriage. Such a basic equipment could be of great help to those women who might be deprived of normal home life later. At present, great deal of time and money of the institutions providing shelter to such women have to be spent in starting from the very beginning to equip them to stand on their own. Marriage appears to be the only means of their rehabilitation.

Problems of educating adult women are quite different and should be tackled differently. In preparing programmes for these women, one must be more keen on making them efficient housewives, enlightened mothers and active members of a community rather than on purely teaching them the three Rs. They must be also helped to learn some gainful occupation. This, however, has to be combined with facilities for production and marketing.

**Health.**—In any integrated programme of women's welfare, health measures are vitally important. According to the Census Report of 1951, there seem to be more men than women in most of the regions. One of the reasons for this seems to be that many women die in pregnancy and child birth. The programmes for maternity and child health as well as family planning have no doubt been given higher priorities in planning for women welfare services, particularly in the rural areas. How far these services will prove useful to women will depend upon the enlightened attitude of entire families. It is orthodoxy, ignorance and fear of innovation that handicap the development of these services. Insanitary conditions and extreme poverty aggravate the health problems.

Achievement of economic independence or economic gain by women raises far-reaching questions. First, the problem of enabling women to combine work with home life has to be solved. In the present context of increasing urbanisation and resulting im-

personalisation of community life, working women's entire family life has to be reorganized. The focus is to be more on turning home-making into a joint responsibility of both husband and wife, even though taking care of children and home may still be recognized as the primary responsibility of women. They would also require help in cutting down the drab routine and drudgery of daily household work. This may involve change in food habits of the family as well as the development of new equipment and arrangements to be used in cooking, washing of utensils and cleaning of the house.

The feeling of guilt often aroused through conflicts with the traditional idea that women's place is in their home, or that of being disorganized by unplanned participation in too many activities, needs to be carefully considered.

The majority of problems indicated above are the direct result of the fact that women's participation in the economic life of the country is not a part of deliberate planning. If women are helped to look upon training, work, and enlightened community participation, as important as marriage and family life and helped consciously to plan for them, a great deal of confusion and conflict in their later life could be avoided. It is possible for women to devote a part of their life to preparing for a vocation or profession and as in planning for marriage and family life, then a part to be devoted to their husband and children, and lastly, a part to work and community participation. However, this has to be a deliberately planned process. Here it is essential to note that the traditional ideal of women as wives and mothers, as well as the present day economy makes it difficult for a majority of women in India at this stage to undertake such deliberate planning. It is possible only if the educated and qualified women refuse to be put on the shelf as soon as they marry or look upon their jobs before marriage as merely a period of waiting. This calls for a programme of their proper orientation towards marriage, work and community life from the early stage of their education, so that a right attitude towards these may be developed. Planning for increasing education and vocational training of girls and women would be a national loss if they fail to make

any contribution to the society through work and active participation in the community life. Women's organizations can do a lot in keeping the vocational spirit alive in married women by organizing or conducting training or refresher courses for these women, so that while they are occupied with the job of making a home and caring for their children they are also given necessary opportunities to keep their skills alive. The significance of this kind of programme is all the more evident when viewed against the objectives of raising the standard of living of the people. In a country where the development of services is often hampered by lack of skilled personnel, the fullest possible utilisation of each and every trained woman in the area of her proficiency should be placed on the same emergency basis as the programme of industrialization, technological development and agricultural improvement. It is also important to recognize that for some women self-expression through work is as important as looking after children and home. Forcing such women to the four walls of the home to fulfil the role of marital life and to satisfy the needs of children will do more harm to them than good. For what children need is not merely the physical presence of mothers but a feeling of being loved and looked after.

In addition to planned preparation by women certain amount of adjustment in the attitudes and habits of other members of the family, particularly of husbands, is necessary. "Breadwinning is no longer a monopoly of men, and home-making should no longer be a monopoly of women."<sup>1</sup> One of the aims of the programme for family life education should, therefore, be to help young men and women to recognize that building up a home after marriage is a joint venture involving shared responsibilities. The programmes offering necessary benefits to enable women to combine work and home life in the form of maternity benefits, creches, day care centres, etc., are equally important, since a large number of women have to work, or have to be encouraged to work to supplement family income, particularly in a developing industrial society of today. Even where cottage or small scale industries are possible

<sup>1</sup>Alva Myrdal and Viola Klein, *Women's Two Roles—Home and Work*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., 1956.

women cannot participate in such programmes effectively if a greater part of their life is to be spent in managing the home and taking care of children. They would need some leisure, not only for necessary training in such occupations, but also for using their skills effectively. Our entire programme of social education for women, to prepare them to participate in the community life, to make them aware of their rights and responsibilities as well as to be effective wives and mothers in the light of modern knowledge and skills, could succeed only if they have some leisure. Herein lies the value of day care centres even for children of non-working mothers. The contribution of such centres in directly and indirectly helping women to be better wives and mothers is to be recognized. Family planning is yet another programme necessary not only to control population, but to ensure health and happiness of mothers and children through deliberate spacing of children. Family planning can also solve the problem of lack of leisure to women.

Some of these ideas may not be practicable nor be experimented without a clear understanding of the socio-economic and cultural background of the community concerned. However, their value in the future scheme of things can no longer be ignored.

**Women Deprived of Normal Home Life.**—This group covers a variety of problems faced by women who are deprived of a normal home life on account of socio-economic, cultural or personal factors. They range from dependent, neglected and destitute women to those who are in moral danger, sex delinquent women and even prostitutes. Rapid changes, exposure to new ideas and interests as well as development of recent legislations removing social disabilities of women are some of the contributing factors. The problems faced by these women are so wide and varied that they require a planned approach through development of preventive care and after-care services. The preventive services should include those aiming at strengthening women in their own home. They will cover such services as family counselling, family assistance, education for family life, as well as effective implementation of legislations already in existence and remedying the flaws in the

existing laws. It is necessary to recognize that no law can be effective if social consciousness lags behind for too long a time. The care and after-care services have to be geared to helping women in planning for, preparing and implementing the process of their ultimate rehabilitation in the community.

**Women Welfare Plans and Programme.**—The earlier analysis of the changing status of women in India shows clearly that voluntary women welfare organizations have been mainly responsible for initiating many of the women welfare services in India. There are about 10,000 voluntary welfare agencies in existence today, and a majority of them are, directly or indirectly, connected with welfare of women and children. Some of the well-established ones are Indian Red Cross Society, Kasturba Gandhi National Memorial Fund, National Association for Moral and Social Hygiene, The Indian Women's Conference, National Council of Women in India, Indian Conference of Social Work, National Association for Planned Parenthood, etc. However, development of several organizations has created the problem of their proper co-ordination, for a comprehensive planning and implementation of women welfare activities indicated earlier. Specific area of operation of each need had to be clearly worked out.

Establishment of the Central Social Welfare Board in 1953, under the Ministry of Education, gave great impetus to comprehensive planning and organization of women welfare programmes on a nationwide scale. Full utilisation of existing voluntary agencies not only in the training of women welfare workers but also in implementation of welfare programmes for women is unique. The Ministry of Health through its programme of Family Planning and Maternity and Child Health as well as the Ministry of Home Affairs with its concentration on the programme of social and moral hygiene, beggary, rehabilitation of persons discharged from correctional and non-correctional institutions, etc., are also participating, directly as well as indirectly, in the development of women welfare programmes. Under the First Five-Year Plan, Rs. 5 crores have been allocated for the development of social welfare services. Women welfare programmes receive a small portion of the amount, but

during the second plan period, Rs. 29 crores have been allocated.

Through women welfare programmes covered through the Central Social Welfare Board, financial aid is rendered to deserving organizations and institutions working for the welfare of women, to maintain their existing programmes and to develop new services on the basis of matching grants. By March, 1960 about 2,600 institutions for women have been aided, besides those offering multi-purpose services. This programme has been very helpful in strengthening the services rendered by voluntary organizations and institutions. However, the need to combine the aid with establishment of minimum standards of care and services and their effective enforcement is being increasingly recognized now. However, this depends upon the development of a cadre of competent and properly trained personnel and counsellors with a basic approach of help and guidance rather than inspection. The emphasis should be more on improving the quality of services rendered rather than on increasing their quantity. The deserving institutions and organizations must be ensured continuous grants in order to improve the existing services and to gain a sense of security.

The Central Social Welfare Board has also been progressively active, particularly since April, 1957 in sponsoring and aiding new welfare services for women and children in uncovered areas. This has been achieved through the schemes of Welfare Extension Projects in rural family welfare projects, and after-care programmes. The objectives of rural welfare extension projects have been to provide basic welfare services to women, children and the handicapped.

Since April, 1957 these projects are tied up with the larger community development projects, each covering 100 villages with 14 to 17 centres. It is estimated that at the end of the second plan period, there will be about 550 projects of this type with 13,250 centres covering 119,000 villages with a total population of 157 million. Personnel required to implement these projects will include 6,600 *gram sevikas* and 1,320 midwives. Thus, all welfare work relating to women and children in the community development areas are now under the direction of the Central Social Welfare Board.



Activities at the project centres include *balvadia*, creche-cum basic schools, maternity services, craft classes, social education for women and provisions for cultural and recreational facilities. At each centre there is a *gram sevika*, a craft instructor and a *dai*; at project level, there is a midwife and a *mukhya sevika*. The urban family welfare schemes are really meant to offer economic aid to women of lower middle-class families. Industrial co-operatives have been formed for starting small scale industries in selected urban areas to employ about 500 women. Here each is expected to earn about one rupee and a half a day. It is hoped to set up about 20 units to benefit 10,000 families at the end of the second plan period. Help of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry is sought in providing trained personnel and developing marketing facilities.

In addition to the above programmes, the Central Social Welfare Board has also embarked upon a scheme to set up about 100 pilot welfare extension projects in urban areas, particularly for development of welfare services for women and children. Each project will cover 500 families of about 25,000 individuals. The main services to be offered to women are social education, craft classes and cultural and recreational facilities.

Another area of welfare activities undertaken by the Board, affecting the welfare of women, is after-care services. Under these schemes State homes are being set up to provide temporary shelter, organize production units and give guidance and help to women who come out of the institutions, correctional and non-correctional. Therapy help in the process of their ultimate rehabilitation in the community is also given. It is estimated that by the end of the second plan period, there will be about 80 homes, 80 production units, and 330 district shelters, providing facilities to nearly 40,900 persons including women.

In order to train suitable personnel for implementing rural welfare extension projects, training programmes for mature women with knowledge of rural conditions and aptitude for learning and teaching are also envisaged. They aim at helping selected women to acquire minimum educational qualifications and skills so that they can be found suitable for the posts of inspection and *gram sevikas*.

Maternity and child health programmes developed through the Ministry of Health have an indirect bearing on the welfare of women. In addition, the Family Planning Board has been established by the Union Ministry of Health to direct family planning programme during the second plan period. A provision of Rs. 497 lakhs has been made for family planning work. 500 clinics in urban areas and 2,000 clinics in rural areas will be established. The need for integrating family planning work with that of maternity and child welfare services is being increasingly recognized now as indicated by the provision that, as far as possible, there will be one clinic in every maternity and child health centre as well as in primary health centres, hospitals and medical teaching institutions.

In the third plan period highest priority has been given to the needs of women and children.

The foregoing review of several programmes sponsored through governmental and voluntary initiatives clearly shows that programmes of women welfare involves several ministries and thousands of voluntary organizations.

**Law in Relation to Women.**—Position of women in a given society is governed not only by the established traditions and modes but also by the evolving legislations which often mirror the changing tempo of a given society. A brief analysis of legislations aiming at removing social disabilities as well as ensuring basic rights and protection to women would, therefore, be helpful in assessing their true status.

The women's right under the personal Law of Hindus and Muslims as existing during the British period have been inferior to those of men in matters of religion, marriage, succession, inheritance, maintenance, etc. However, these conditions have been slowly remedied after independence through constitutional provisions, directives and legislations.

The Child Marriage Restraint Act of 1929, the Hindu Marriage Disability Removal Act of 1946, etc., have been some of the earlier legislations aiming at broadening the traditional marriage and family patterns. These early efforts, however, could not completely

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remedy traditional and personal laws relating to marriage and family life in India.

The Special Marriage Act of 1954, the Hindu Marriage Act of 1955, the Hindu Succession Act and Hindu Adoption and Maintenance Act of 1956, have given social equality to Hindu women in matters of marriage, adoption and inheritance, and joint responsibilities with men to carry the burden of marriage and family life. These legislations, however, do not affect the status of women in other communities which are still governed by previous legislations and customary laws. Suppression of Immoral Traffic in Women and Girls Act of 1956 has been another measure aiming at solving the complex and elusive problems affecting the very moral basis of the family and society. Legislations protecting women working in mines and plantations are extensions of the benefits given to women workers in industries. However, women working in many other fields need similar protection and help, particularly in effective care of their children, and ensuring smooth running of their homes.

The constitution of independent India prohibits any discrimination in employment of women and offers her full right to exercise her civil rights and privileges. These changes, no doubt, have tremendous significance in releasing the potentials of women in India. However, in this as well as other areas of legislation a great deal depends upon development of community consciousness and effective law enforcing machinery.

It can be said that to become real and full partners with men in life's struggles and achievements, women in India have marched through a difficult, and winding path. They have now attained their life's dream, but its realization depends upon their inner strength to use their rights with a sense of responsibility, awareness of their growing readiness and the ability to look into the future.

## CHAPTER

# 15

### *Rural Welfare in India— A Historical Approach*

SUGATA DASGUPTA, B.A.

THE field of rural welfare in a country like India, eighty-five per cent of whose population lives in the villages, is naturally bound to be vast. Apart from villagers, even a substantial section of that part of our population which have migrated to towns still maintain their roots in, and contacts with, the rural region. The magnitude of the problems of rural disorganization is equally complex in view of the fact that these problems have a vital impact on the production of primary goods. In a submarginally developed country, where the economy is still largely agrarian and where industrialization is yet to assume a fast pace, villages play an important role in determining the economic position of the country as a whole. Villages supply food and raw materials and even after the consumer goods are produced in factories, cities have to turn to them for their market. The urban culture is likewise made up of materials secured from a wide range of villages from which a city draws its inhabitants and with them their customs, manners, tastes and social attitudes. Although all these, blended in a new environment, assume a new shape, the fact that the economic and social maladjustments prevailing in the rural areas in their turn affect the urban areas as well and determine the conditions of its major social problems cannot be denied.

The necessity of strengthening the economic and social positions of the people who live in the rural areas need, therefore, to be well acknowledged if we have to keep the growth and sustenance

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of our national economy and life in view. An all embracing programme of social welfare, which could help the villager and his society to realize their needs and to secure for them the capacity and power to meet these needs effectively, therefore, inevitably constituted the main bulk of social services in India. From the time the Indian intelligentsia had realized this fact and discovered that the villages held the key to almost all the social problems of the country, their attention had been focussed on the tasks of rural reconstruction. At the start the rural welfare movement in India had, therefore, a deep political and economic bias.

**The Gandhian Approach.**—Gandhiji, who had thus held *swaraj* as the chief goal of all his activities, maintained that self-rule could not be achieved without a programme of total reconstruction of the rural areas. The colossal problems, of poverty, low production of wealth, agricultural and industrial, and of the misconceived plans of education, inertia, superstitions and taboos needed the primary attention, because the villagers who were the mainstay of our population could be freed from economic and social distress and be rehabilitated in a new atmosphere of freedom. In the primary phase the rural reconstruction work initiated by Gandhiji was, therefore, an inevitable and logical corollary of his greater political movement for independence. To him the rural reconstruction programme represented chiefly a three-tier activity. Economic re-organization of the rural areas, by adoption of a comprehensive programme of village industries which may enable villagers to meet their daily requirements of food, shelter and clothing and some other basic needs of life, was one of these. The programme of rural industries included *Khadi*; an attempt, to meet the requirement of cloth for every citizen of India who took to hand-spinning and to place the handloom industry of the country on a sound footing, formed the main pillar of his economic programme of rural reconstruction. Closely related to *Khadi* and village industries were his scheme of basic education and Harijan welfare.

It was Gandhi's diagnosis that rural disorganization could be attributed to the flight of intelligentsia from the villages as well as

to the total apathy of the so-called educated people towards the village problem. The system of education introduced by the British had initiated this flight and developed this apathy. Education under the British rule drew its contents mostly from books; manual and productive labour, which could have sustained the interest of the people in the villages and its production plans, found no place in this system. The new plan of education or *Nai-talim* which Gandhi sought to introduce as a part of his rural reconstruction programme, therefore, contained a new emphasis in which education had to be drawn not only from books but also from manual labour, natural, social and physical environments and from productive activities like craft, and agriculture. Education from books had to be strictly correlated to the education drawn from other sources, especially with the productive endeavours. Harijan welfare or the social emancipation of the depressed section of our population, whom Gandhi renamed Harijans found an important place in the programme of rural reconstruction of the Mahatma. Gandhiji, therefore, desired that a new generation of villagers, educated under his new system of education, and able to produce their own requirements, and live in close relationship with all other strata of the society, could thus build a powerful social order where people, free from many fetters and many of their social, economic and physical disabilities, could grow unhampered. This freedom from fetters, and a philosophy which gives an endless satisfaction from even a modest standard of living, worked out by manual and productive labour of small community, contained the basis of his conception of self-rule and, the essence of the rural welfare programme of Mahatma Gandhi. While thinking and planning for the development of a comprehensive programme of rural reconstruction, Gandhi also came to realize the inter-related and integrated nature of the village problems and their broad base. In his rural welfare programmes were included the problems of agriculture and rural industries, of village health and sanitation. Importance of home improvement through introduction of better ovens and ingenious latrines was recognized.

**The Approach of Rabindranath Tagore.**—Rabindranath

Tagore, who took to rural reconstruction in 1905,—at a period which he considered to be the most “matured portion” of his great and eventful life, went ahead of Gandhi on point of time. But Tagore had in many respects an identical plan of rural reconstruction, as far as programmes, approaches and methods of work were concerned. A thorough reconstruction of the socio-economic life of the village and an integrated programme for the solution of the problems of agriculture, industry, health, education and recreation, worked out by the efforts of the villagers themselves, were to Rabindranath Tagore the mainstay of his rural welfare programme.

“To improve sanitation and health of the villagers, to develop their resources and credit, to help them to sell their produce and buy their requirements to their best advantage, to teach them better methods of growing crops, vegetables, and of keeping livestock, to encourage them to learn and practise arts and crafts and bring home to them the benefits of associated life, mutual aid and common endeavour” the workers of Sriniketan depended on generation of enlightenment and consciousness in the minds of the individuals.

“Their aim was to bring back life in its completeness into the villages, making them self-reliant and self-respectful, acquainted with the cultural tradition of their own country and competent to make an efficient use of modern resources for the improvement of their physical, intellectual and economic conditions.”

The rural reconstruction activities of Mahatma Gandhi were initiated in the village of Sevagram, located near Wardha, where the headquarters of the All-India Spinners’ Association, the Hindusthani-Talimi Sangha and Harijan Sevak Sangha were established. The All-India Village Industries Association, however, had its headquarters at Maganvadi, a place located a few miles away from Sevagram. The purpose of these institutions was to initiate research and experimental activities for the evolution of new methods and techniques of work in the fields of industry, agriculture, education and social integration, and to train a band of workers, who could introduce these programmes on their own, in the various parts of the country, and establish centres of village uplift. The construc-

tive workers, thus trained in the Gandhian school of thought, had from then onwards gone out in large numbers and have set up institutions all over the country where they offered a great deal of emphasis on their way of living and on organization of community activities on a self-help basis. Although there are many dissident schools of thought among the followers of Gandhi, the main bulk of them stand united today under one central institution called the All-India Sarva Seva Sangha, which was founded after the death of Gandhi. *Asrams* or isolated centres of welfare activities like these, administered by the followers of Gandhi and the *Sangha*, together constitute the main pillar on which the structure of welfare services for village India rests.

As compared to the above, the experiments of rural reconstruction initiated by Rabindranath Tagore were concentrated only in a few villages around his International University called Visva-Bharati which ran a separate Institute of Rural Reconstruction. The purpose of this Institute located at Sriniketan was mainly two-fold: first, the institution aimed to experiment with the various programmes of work outlined by Tagore and to evolve in the process of this experimentation, certain new methods, techniques and approaches of work, the other and may be, the more important purpose of Sriniketan was to pass on this knowledge thus gained to the benefit of the rest of the country. The programmes of rural reconstruction of Rabindranath Tagore offer emphasis on the application of scientific knowledge to the total development of the rural areas. Although Tagore was not in favour of any disproportionate rise in the standard of living of any particular section of population by concentrating wealth and welfare services among them, he emphasised the need for leading the villagers towards progressive development of their standards of living and for securing modern comforts and welfare services for the people on an equalitarian basis.

To Tagore and Gandhi, the rural problem, however, appeared as a total and integrated whole and not as an isolated phenomenon. The problems of health, sanitation, irrigation and those of agriculture, industry, housing, education and recreation were not to



be solved by attacking each one in turn, but by a total and simultaneous attack on these multifarious problems with the combined resources of the society as a whole.

The problem of rural reconstruction to both of them was again a problem of stimulating the power of self-help among the people and of enabling the villagers to stand on their own legs by the development of their internal resources, social organizations and indigenous leadership. In course of the experiences they gathered at Wardha and Sriniketan, these two welfare philosophers came to realize that the task of social and economic development would ever remain a far cry unless the programmes by their own impact had led to the development of leadership in the village community and stimulated growth of its human resources.

**The Essence of Development.**—The villagers had to be thus provided with the opportunities of education, recreation and leisure. Their abilities had to be recognized; their capacities to stand on their own legs had to be brought home to them, and their spirit of self-reliance and self-sustenance was to be developed, so that the motive power for progress and the demand for social improvements could be rooted in the minds of the people. In the next phase, when the aspirations are stimulated and the people are mobilised for securing higher standards of living, the hands of the indigenous leadership have to be strengthened and the dormant energies of the village society are to be drawn out. What a sleepy and lethargic community needs most to achieve this power of self-sustenance and growth is, more often than not, a dynamic community institution which would give expression to the will of the community and serve to mobilise all its resources for the implementation of an all round programme of development and welfare. The emphasis in planning of rural welfare programmes under their schemes also lay on securing development of the basis of small geographical units, which are not too big to permit the growth of intimate social relationship among their inhabitants, and to secure the fullest development of the potentialities of each member of the community so that the problems could be solved

more by their own efforts than by mere external aid.

The goal of the programmes of rural reconstruction as given in the above paragraph could easily be identified today with the aims and objectives of scientific social work. The Sixth International Conference of Social Work which met at Madras found that social work as a process was designed to make it possible for "the development in individuals their maximum potential through existing institutions (physical, emotional, social and spiritual) or to modify existing institutions to provide a healthier environment in which the individuals may grow and function to the fullest of their individual capacities."

Both Gandhi and Tagore were accredited rebels against the ruling government of the country. The plans they gave could hardly be implemented at a time when the rulers of the State continuously suspected them and retarded all their efforts. Moreover, a total plan for reconstruction of life and material at the village level was bound to be a distant mirage without adequate financial resources and support from the State, which lay beyond these pioneers.

**The Experiments at Baroda.**—This thesis of bringing total welfare measures for the total reconstruction of the village communities in India and the need for solution of the manifold and multifaced problems of the rural society through the effort of the people themselves would thus have ever remained a utopian concept, had not a similar programme of total reconstruction and welfare, backed by adequate financial resources and power of a benevolent monarch been introduced in Baroda, one of the then native states of India. The Maharaja Sayajirao of Baroda, the most eminent among Social Worker-Kings of the British period had thus helped to implement and work out in reality a scheme, which had very many similarities in its objectives and contents, with the plans discussed earlier. In pursuance of these objectives of total reconstruction of life and in the application of scientific knowledge and techniques to the solution of the manifold needs of a community, through stimulation of its own leadership, the Government of Baroda State had introduced a comprehensive programme

of work. As a result of the long period of this noble rule, one can find in Baroda State today almost cent per cent literacy existing among the adults, a library in each village, a health centre for each area catering to the needs of a definite number of people, and effective use of electric power for economic development of almost all its villages. All these have led to a remarkable rise in the standard of living of the people of the area, and the villages in Baroda thus provide today an excellent field for development of more advanced programmes of social welfare.

Following the examples of the Baroda State and the ideals thus laid down by Gandhi and Tagore, a number of important institutions came forward from time to time to organize welfare programme of various descriptions for the systematic development of our rural areas. The contributions made by Mr. Spencer Hatch, of the Y.M.C.A. rural welfare centre at Martandam and activities of the Quaker groups of the American Friends Service Committee merit special mention in this matter.

The rural reconstruction experiments in India have thus historically leaned on programmes of social welfare, and its ideals and objectives are very much akin to the ideals of professional social work. For, reconstruction meant to the Indian leadership not only putting up of school buildings, construction of long winding roads, building bridges and culverts and distribution of seeds and fertilisers, but the main emphasis in rural reconstruction was on development of the human material and on the creation of an urge in the minds of the people for building a moral, humane and bold social order of labour, and recreation, of co-operation and mutual help.

The new society, which has thus been dreamt of by almost all exponents of the theory and practice of rural reconstruction work in India, is very much akin to the structure of the small community, dreamt of by Arthur Morgan. It is a decentralised society of welfare and administration. It is a place where each individual acts in co-operation and collaboration with others and through this interaction with the rest attains his complete development, so that he can contribute his mite as a developed indivi-

dual to the development of the society as a whole. The individual draws his strength from the society and the society from the individual. The growth of the personality of individual villagers and their willingness to engage themselves in a combined and co-operative effort for the reconstruction of particular rural regions which they inhabit has been increasingly recognized. It is the surest guarantee for achieving the optimum measure of development for the rural community.

**Independence and After.**—After India attained independence in 1947, the question of rural reconstruction became uppermost in the minds of the leaders of the country. The techniques, methods and patterns of village development recommended earlier came to occupy an important place in the new schemes which were to be formulated. The experiments of the Governments of Punjab at Gurgaon and of Uttar Pradesh in the district of Etawah where the application of scientific techniques under state initiative and with people's co-operation which helped to secure phenomenal development of the life and material of the respective areas, went a long way to prove the utility of these methods. A township was organized on a self-help basis at Faridabad, situated a few miles away from Delhi, with the help of the refugees of West Punjab. Total efforts were made to rehabilitate them. Thus, the new township went a long way in putting these methods of work to new fields of social problems.

**'Nilokheri' the Forerunner.**—The most decisive experiment of the post-independence period, which pointed out that total reconstruction of life of a specific community or group through its own efforts, should form the future pattern of development for rural areas was, however, provided by the attempted organization of a refugee township at Nilokheri. A group of refugees who had settled in the Kurukshetra camp in 1947 were organized in a co-operative society, based on the democratic principles embodied in the Indian Constitution. Nilokheri is a place located on the border of Delhi and the Punjab. The aim of the organizer of the project was to secure for the refugees, earned income, social ownership of the means of production, full employment for the able-

bodied adults and integration of individual liberty into collective leadership, for achievement of total welfare. In the beginning, the community organized in December, 1947 a vocational training centre which offered facilities for training in weaving, dyeing and calico printing, gradually grew into a virile and dynamic society which laid its own roads, built its own worksheds, sunk tube-wells and set up a farm, with dairy, poultry and piggery closely attached to it. The programmes of work which were thus organized at Nilokheri attempted to root a group of unhappy migrants into a life of contentment through labour. Economic reconstruction activities at Nilokheri were integrated with the programmes of education, health and recreation and were organized under a number of well formed institutions, of which the most important were its *panchayat* and consumers' co-operative. The success of the organizers of the township in bringing required measures of social, psychological and economic stability in the community of uprooted refugees, inspired the Government of India who found in it an important pathfinder for their immediate programmes of rural reconstruction which had by then become their chief concern. In the following few years the Government of India evolved a nationwide plan for village development and the administrator of the Nilokheri township, Sri S. K. Dey, became the administrator of a new government organization called the Community Project Administration; he piloted a scheme of community projects for reconstruction of the total structure of village India through a series of dynamic schemes of welfare and development. Aims of the community development projects which were later administered by the Ministry of Community Development and Co-operation were to meet the health, housing, educational and welfare needs of the rural areas with the help of technical experts, and through the efforts of the communities themselves.

**Community Development Programme in India.**—The community development programme initiated on October 2, 1952 under fifty-five pilot projects was thus to serve as a forerunner for more such projects scheduled to cover all the villages of the country in course of time. Each original project, introduced in 1952, com-

prised an area of 300 villages and was administered by a Project Advisory Committee and a Project Executive Officer. The Committee consisted of the people's representatives, and the Project Executive Officer was the head or a co-ordinator of a team of technical experts known as subject matter specialists in agriculture, animal husbandry, industry, veterinary, co-operatives and social education. For each zone of 10 villages an area worker, called the village level worker, functioned as a replica of these various extension officers. By training and orientation a multipurpose expert was to help the villagers to solve the multifarious problems of each village zone.

In the next phase of this movement, a number of national extension service blocks were started, each comprising 100 villages and with a set up and purpose identical to those of the community projects. Maximum emphasis in this phase was laid on converting the programme, initiated by Government in 1952 with the help of the people into a people's programme, in which villagers were expected to take all the initiative and act as the leaders of the programme with the government acting as a helper only. The N.E.S. blocks were supposed at a later stage to intensify their activities in order to solve the basic problems of food, water supply, communication, housing and education of the community. After these are thus solved, the community development work, was scheduled to reach its final stage, solely under the initiative of the people themselves. The Government, therefore, decided as a logical corollary of the above programme of self-help that elected *gram panchayats*, block *panchayats*, and *zila parisads* should take charge of the development projects at the village, block and the district levels respectively, and the expert staff of the government were to be employed by these respective agencies.

The peculiar contribution of the community development programme in India for the creation of a welfare state is that, while other nation building departments of the Government, such as the Departments of Agriculture, Industry, Irrigation, Health and Education concentrate on bringing their respective development plans to the rural areas, the community development projects seek to

present all these programmes in a co-ordinated and integrated manner, so that these could answer the multifarious needs of the rural community on a planned basis and prepare them to take charge of these activities, on the strength of their growing resources and leadership in the shortest possible time.

**Rural Reconstruction and Rural Welfare.**—The organizers of rural welfare programmes in India have thus been mainly concerned with the solution of the various needs of the rural community which require systematic application of scientific and technical knowledge and skills. The Sixth International Conference of Social Work acknowledged this need when they opined that the skills and techniques of social work are to be used for “an extension of health, nutrition and other services, particularly by being concerned with the social implications of such services”.

The programmes mentioned in the preceding paragraphs which are to cater to the multifarious needs of the rural community are required to establish a wholesome educative and recreative standard of living in the village in India. But the fundamental disequilibrium and social imbalance which have been in existence in the rural areas are not so much due to the immediate absence of these services, but to the inability of the rural groups and communities to keep pace with the changing times. The leaders and the people of the villages are thus tragically unable to adjust to the new demands created by a constantly rising standard of living. The ability to change with the changing environment, the readiness to take to new tools and programmes for production of wealth and the growing ability of a community to use new knowledge and skill, are essential in order to enable a community to help itself in the face of frequent waves of maladjustments and social disequilibrium. These are, it must be acknowledged, the inevitable concomitants of a dynamic social life and the source of the rise of social problems. Although the rural welfare programme in India requires skilled assistance from various technical experts for the organization of extension services, it must, therefore, ensure development of the non-material culture of the people

and the complete utilisation of the human material by the physical, emotional, social and spiritual development of the collective personality of the Indian villages. From what has been stated earlier, it is evident that, drawing up of latent resources of a community and the individuals, new leaders should be born to take upon themselves the responsibility of the development of the community. This constitutes one of the most significant of the rural welfare programmes in India.

History of rural welfare work in the last few years has thus proved that introduction of welfare services in the rural areas not only need help of technical experts, such as doctors, engineers, agriculturists and so on, but also the devoted services of trained social workers who can apply various techniques of social work for stimulation of the spirit of self-help and for the creation of the power of self-development in a community.

**Techniques of Social Work**—Five techniques of Social Work, which could be of use in varying degrees for the implementation of the rural welfare programmes and for the development of the power and resources of a community to solve its own need, are known as social case work, group work, community organization, social service administration and research. As the demand for solution of the basic needs of a community as a whole goes on increasing, rural welfare programmes will have to be evolved to meet these needs. The problem of food, shelter, clothing, health, recreation and education will have to be solved through the development of community leadership and community organizations. This needs the application of methods of community organizations and leadership training, and since even the smallest community has to be approached only through its established or formative social groups; group resources need as well to be drawn out and utilised for the purpose of community development. The administrators of the welfare programmes should be likewise trained to use their whole administrative machinery for stimulating self-help in the people with whom they work and for using developed groups for the solution of the problems of a community. The techniques of social



work, at least a few of these should, therefore, be applied to the rural community to stimulate its own resources, to build its own leadership, to draw up its programmes and to set up social welfare institutions, which will, for all times to come, stand as the agents of the community in meeting its growing needs.

**New Needs and New Challenges.**—It is, however, an undeniable fact that the villages, which lie steeped in poverty and economic distress will have to be first cured of their problems of economic and social handicaps. People's energy has, therefore, for a long time to come, to be directed, mobilised and stimulated for the solution of their basic needs, which provide a large number of villagers with a common source of danger.

The attempts of the organizers of rural welfare programmes in India have hitherto, therefore, been to solve these fundamental social and economic problems. Yet the solution of these basic problems, in course of time, will enhance, in its very process, the power of the community to build more services and to realize more of its needs. Social work is a perpetual race between human capacities and human aspirations, and as new problems arise and are solved, and the basic and fundamental obstacles of life are removed, social work tends to develop new textures of services to meet the new needs. The community in its turn and with the solution of each of its problems sets up new goals and new targets of achievements.

The rural community in India is thus well set on its path of onward journey where several new needs are sure to arise as milestones on both sides of its long route. **At every step of this march, the community will solve its existing problems and new programmes of welfare will be needed.**

The distinction between the rural welfare schemes and the urban welfare schemes will then be demolished, and a new set of services catering to the needs of all will be offered to both the social groups, which, after the solution of the peculiar basic problems of each sector, will look to the satisfaction of their distinctive needs. The body of knowledge known as scientific social work will be applied to rural welfare work. The time is, therefore,

not far when social workers and institutes offering training in social work should plan to reorient their curriculum of studies to meet the coming challenge of the growing rural society in India.



## CHAPTER

# 16

### *Adult Education and Social Education*

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**Introduction.**—In a rapidly developing country like India, the problems of adult education are not only vast but complicated. Adult education should not become a belated compensation of a repentant society to those who could not be supplied with the facilities of education while they were young. It cannot be the minimum of education of the adults so that the country may be saved from the blame of having abandoned the majority of its population to ignorance. In a democratic society, it should derive its role and content largely from its faith in democracy. It should not only provide continuation education to those who could not pursue their studies in pre-adult stage due to economic or social pressure of life, but to enable the adult citizen to acquire democracy as a way of life. In a country rapidly taking to industrialization, it should provide, in addition, training in the use of tools, both in the fields of agriculture and industry in such a way that an individual maintains his creativeness even under the pressure of automaton.

Adult education, thus, should assume a three-fold role of (a) remedial education; (b) lateral transmission of knowledge both in the field of technology and liberal arts; and (c) preparation for adjusting and contributing to the demands of social life and social change within the framework of a democratic society. Social education thus can be said to become a part of adult education if it provides preparation for social adjustment and social change to adult citizens.

The field of social education, however, is more comprehen-

sive than adult education, if social education is taken as an education for life in society. It is an educational process to promote social values, with a view to facilitating satisfactory adjustment to individuals in society. The term, adjustment is used in a dynamic sense. In the initial stage, the child acquires social values from his parents and other members of the unitary or the joint family to which he belongs. The influence of his religion and his caste confirms and stabilises these values. As he grows, he comes in contact with other playmates. Later as a youth, he gets opportunities to compare his values with others and feels confronted with the prevalence of differences in social practices. At times he questions, mostly he succumbs. Still later, if he has the facilities to develop his personality and has acquired ability to exert his influence, he contributes to the changes in the prevailing habits and customs. It is in this dynamic sense that social education is both education for social adjustment and for social change. It is, however, true to say that much of the foundation of social values is laid in the early stages of growth, especially in childhood and youth. There leaves very little for change in social values and social habits during adulthood. The concentration of social education to be effective, must, therefore, be made during early years of childhood and youth. In the existing social structure, this influence is generated through participation in social institutions and social organizations, such as the family, the caste, the temple, the school, the play-group and the neighbourhood. Cultural and social activities facilitate promotion of social education. Therefore what remains to be done in social education for adults is (a) continuation of healthy influences of the social institutions and organizations; (b) providing of additional opportunities, especially to youth and young adults, to test social values inherited from the family, the caste, the temple and the neighbourhood by extending the area of interests and association, especially through voluntary organizations; (c) strengthening the effect of civic and economic organizations, such as the *panchayat*, the co-operative; and (d) promoting social actions wherever required to help the individual, the group and the local community to overcome prevailing antisocial practices.

Dr. S. R. Ranganathan in his masterly appraisal of the scope of adult education desires us to recognize nine major planes in the life of the society and to develop the role and the content to cover these planes. They are: (a) material; (b) bio; (c) emotional; (d) intellectual; (e) ethical; (f) aesthetic; (g) political; (h) economic; and (i) spiritual. He rightly believes that not only these planes should be attended in the role and content of child education and adolescent education, but also of adult education, as "the realization of the objective of child education and adolescent education is very much conditioned by adult education. The education of the former cannot be usefully completed in a social vacuum."<sup>1</sup> According to Dr. Ranganathan, the role and the content of adult education should have (a) adult education for those who were denied all opportunities of education during pre-adult stage; (b) adult education for the restoration of harmony in the total development programme; and (c) adult education for above-normal with emphasis on civic sense, ethical standard and spiritual corrective.<sup>2</sup>

The programme of adult education and social education should be considered in the background of its comprehensive coverage as indicated above. This will require a major study not only of the efforts of the Government and voluntary organizations at Central, State and local levels, but also of the effort of various social institutions and organizations, such as the family, the caste, the religion, the school and of various movements, such as community development, *panchayati raj*, co-operation, *bhoodan*, *gramdan*, etc. It would be necessary also to study the effect of various social legislations. Such a study is necessary to have an objective appraisal of the fields of adult education and social education. Various studies made in the past cover only a limited aspect of the programme. Possibly, it is because of the limited scope of these studies that the comprehensive picture of the total effort of social education is not before the public. It is hoped that such a comprehensive study, even in a limited geographical area, is

<sup>1</sup>S. R. Ranganathan, *Adult Education—An Appraisal—Social Education in Changing Society—A Symposium*, Delhi: Indian Adult Education Association, 1959.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*

undertaken in the near future. The scope of the present effort is limited to the programme promoted by the Government organizations during the first and second plans, and by the State and national voluntary organizations. Unfortunately, very little is recorded of the voluntary effort made in the fields of adult education and social education by local communities.

**Before Independence.**—It is true to say that the present is the reflection of the past and the future will be the image of the present. The movement of adult education, including social education, is not an exception. The experiences of the past have moulded the present programme of social education and the future is being framed in the image of the present. To an extent, this in itself is a limiting factor in the growth of the movement. We seem to have learnt to live with it all the same.

The past can be divided into two periods, namely, (a) before independence; and (b) after independence. The period before independence is discussed in detail by Sardar Sohan Singh in his valuable book, *History of Adult Education During British Period*.<sup>3</sup> In this chapter we shall try to highlight some of the important trends prevalent during this period.

The period experienced both stages of stagnation, progress and decline, depending mainly on the influences of the first and second World Wars, the economic depression and the freedom movement. Before the first World War, introduction of (a) the new system of education; (b) the printing press; and (c) the expansion of communication were three major influences in promoting education among adults. Nurullah and Naik observed: "One of the most important results of the new education was the growth of a new literature and press in the modern Indian languages."<sup>4</sup> Similarly introduction of modern means of transport constituted "another informal agency of education which brought hitherto far away people into contact with one another and thus forcing them to

<sup>3</sup>Sohan Singh, *History of Adult Education During British Period*, Delhi: Indian Adult Association, 1957.

<sup>4</sup>Syed Nurullah and J. P. Naik, *History of Education in India During British Period*, Bombay: Macmillan & Co., Ltd., 1951, p.313.

abandon old ways of thought and take to new ways.”<sup>5</sup> In addition, as a result of the contact with Europeans, Indians learnt to form new social groups and voluntary organizations, for combined action, first for the purpose of education and social reform and later for political agitation. Introduction of libraries and museums provided a formal form of adult education; although their development was very slow. Baroda and Mysore made outstanding contributions by providing library services and adult schools in villages respectively.

After the first World War, the Indian soldiers returning home had brought a “leaven of awakening consciousness”. This was further helped by the growth of co-operation movement during the period. In 1928, the Royal Commission on Agriculture in India took special notice of the contribution of co-operative movement to adult education and said in its report, “it is interesting to note that in rural areas in the Punjab, there has been an intimate connection between the literacy movement and the education department.”

The freedom movement contributed considerably to promoting adult education activities both by making citizens conscious of their rights to be independent and by providing opportunities of constructive work among people. The organization of literacy classes, opening of new schools, libraries and reading rooms were given a prominent place in the programme of constructive work.

The period of economic depression which swept over the world affected the growth of the movement. Expenses were cut in all directions, and, as usual, activities of education, including adult education suffered the most.

When the popular ministries came into power in the provinces in 1937, adult education programme received not only new life but new orientation. National leaders like Shri Syed Mahmud, Shri Rajagopalachari, Shri B. G. Kher took personal interest in promoting the programme. Some of the Provincial Governments allotted large sums of money for adult education and established a separate section in the Directorate of Education for its speedy

<sup>5</sup>Sohan Singh, *op. cit.*, p.13.



promotion. During the period of 1938-42, the following achievements were recorded throughout the country: The number of adult classes or centres rose to 1,88,777. Nearly 78,18,189 persons were enrolled in the classes and the number of adults who became literate was 29,04,068.<sup>6</sup>

In the year 1940 the Central Advisory Board of Education took stock of the programme of adult education and made some of the following recommendations:

(1) "Literacy is a movement of further education and must not be regarded as an end in itself. (2) Every effort should be made to enlist the help of voluntary agencies. (3) Mechanical aids to learning, such as radio, cinema, gramophone and magic lantern can be used with great effect in adult education. (4) An adequate supply of trained and competent teachers is the fundamental need in adult education. Teachers in day school will require a special course of training. The course of training in the normal school should include instructions in the technique of teaching adults. (5) A library is an essential adjunct to every adult education centre. (6) The importance of a wide expansion of facilities for adult education is even more important in the case of women than that of men. (7) With regard to literate workers in urban areas, it is essential to secure the co-operation of employers, of labour and association of workers. The question of levying a tax on those employers of labour who do not make adequate provision for the education of their employees is worthy of consideration. (8) The Central Government should offer financial assistance to Provincial Governments which are prepared to carry out approved schemes within the next five years".

These recommendations were bold ideas in 1940. They laid, however, the foundation of present development.

In the field of voluntary effort two significant developments took place. Jamia Millia, Delhi established an Adult Education Department which organized community centres and brought out literature for neo-literates. Both these efforts met the needs of the

<sup>6</sup>Sohan Singh, *Ibid.*

field. Others followed these experiments with advantage. The formation of Indian Adult Education Association in 1939 was a second notable event. The Delhi Adult Education Association which had come into existence in 1937 took an initiative in calling the first Indian Adult Education Conference in 1938. The Conference appointed a committee with Dr. Saha Sulaiman as Chairman and Professor H. A. Richardson as Secretary to review adult education work in the country, preparatory to the founding of the Central Organization. The report of the committee pointed out that too much emphasis was being laid on literacy work. It stated "the trade of the individual should be used as much as possible as the base of all literacy work, so that literacy may be a natural expression of an inward need and not merely an artificial growth grafted on the exterior of the human mind where it is more likely that it will act as irritant than as a stimulant to further knowledge." As a result of the deliberation of the committee, the workers in the field organized themselves into an all-India organization in 1939. Since then, the association continues to organize annual conferences, national and regional seminars and publish literature for field workers. It provides a much needed forum for official and voluntary workers to meet together to promote the movement of adult education in the country.

During the last phase of 1942-47, the movement of adult education was both at its decline and its height. The Provincial Ministries resigned, and the nation launched the Quit India Movement. The organized activities of adult education were neglected. At the same time, the temper of the country was set against the continuation of the foreign rule, the total adult population demanding immediate freedom. It was in the struggle that the preparation for the government of the free country was laid.

**After Independence.**—The period of 1947 to 1960 can be divided into three parts, namely, (1) 1947 to 1951; (2) the First Five-Year Plan period (1952 to 1956); and (3) the second Five-Year Plan period (1956 to 1960).

In the new era between 1947 and 1952 National Government at the Centre came into power. Various State Governments, except

those involved in partition, launched extensive programmes of adult education. The Central Government considered it desirable to draw up a general scheme of adult education which could guide the State Governments in preparing the programme. Accordingly in 1948, the Central Advisory Board on Education set up a committee under the chairmanship of Shri Mohanlal Saxena to plan the scheme. The committee in its report extended the field of adult education from literacy, library and reading room to education for citizenship, health, agriculture, crafts and called it social education. The field of adult education extended its scope to social education. The new concept of social education appears to have been introduced without proper understanding of its dynamics and without realizing the resources required to achieve its objective. In assuming a big role, the field of adult education appears to have lost its soul. When the country has not the resources of providing primary education to children, extending the programme has created confusion in the minds of the people. The events of the last ten years have sufficiently indicated the truth of this observation.

**The First Five-Year Plan.**—The country launched its first Five-Year Plan in 1952. The preparation of the plan and its acceptance by the Parliament and the public was in itself one of the most effective efforts in adult education. A new hope was kindled in the heart of every citizen for systematic development and progress. Although the Plan as a whole was an effort to stimulate more effective utilisation of national resources by adult citizens, the programme of social education as an activity did not get much attention. In terms of priorities, it was rated very low. Only Rs. 7.5 crores were allotted for social education out of Rs. 150 crores on education in the total plan of Rs. 2069 crores. During reappraisal, Rs. 7.5 crores were reduced to Rs. 5 crores. With regard to the objective of social education, it was stated, "The success of planning in a democracy depends on the growth of the spirit of co-operation and disciplined citizenship and the degree to which it is possible to evoke public enthusiasm and build up local leadership. It is essential for the successful implementation of the Plan that the

educational programme should train the individual to place obligations above rights and should help the growth of creative faculties and of critical appreciation.”<sup>7</sup> The need for the expansion of the social education programme during the first plan was recognized as one of “the principal requirements of present educational situation”. It was stated in the plan that “in a country in which so large a proportion of the population lacks literacy, the growth of Social Education has a vital significance for national development.”<sup>8</sup> In addition to the provision of Rs. 5 crores in the Central sector, several States provided for social education programme, specially for library and literacy classes. It was further stated that the village *panchayats*, co-operative societies, trade unions and the village school should be utilised to promote the programme.

In 1952, the programme of community development was launched in the country, first in a selected number of projects and later as an integral part of the total development programme. By the end of the first plan there were 1065 national extension and community development projects in the country. It was for the first time that social education became an integral part of the community development programme. Along with other activities to development, such as agriculture, animal husbandry, cottage industries, health and education, social education was introduced for harmonious development of the village community. In the programme of community development the influence of social education manifested in three different ways, namely, (1) community development as a movement was in itself a programme of social education. It tried to focus the attention of the villagers to the need to work together for the development of the village community; (2) various extension workers in trying to extend the body of knowledge in the fields of agriculture, animal husbandry, industry and health tried to help the villagers in introducing changes in practice of work. This in itself carried an element of social education; and (3) In

<sup>7</sup>Government of India, Planning Commission, New Delhi: *The First Five Year Plan: A Summary*, 1952, p.111.

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid.*, p.114.

addition, the activities of literacy centres, reading rooms, libraries, youth clubs, women's clubs and of recreation and culture contributed considerably to the promotion of social education among villagers. It was for the first time that separate functionaries, one man and one woman were allotted for social education on par with other extension workers for a block with an average of the population of 66,000 living in 100 villages. The services of school teachers, youth leaders and other voluntary workers were harnessed to spread social education and adult education among villagers. This in fact was an important gain. During the first plan, Rs. 195 lakhs were spent for social education in rural areas through the programme of community development. 41,000 adult education centres were started and 10 lakh adults were made literate in addition to the organization of a large number of community centres, youth clubs, libraries and reading rooms. The Central Social Welfare Board, established during the plan period, contributed considerably to promoting adult education and social education among women through its programme of welfare extension projects. For the first time, so intensive an effort was made to promote adult education programme among women in rural areas. In addition to the above, nearly Rs. 382 lakhs have been spent by the State Governments in promoting social education in respective States.

During the first plan period, various local bodies, such as Delhi, Ahmedabad and Bombay introduced the programme of social education on an extensive scale. The Delhi Municipal Committee established a department of social education and provided more than Rs. 1 lakh a year to establish regional community centres in different wards. The Bombay City Social Education Committee with the financial assistance of the Municipal Corporation and the public provided a network of literacy classes in industrial areas. Other local bodies also began to provide funds and personnel for the promotion of the programme.

In addition, it is necessary to recognize the valuable role played both by newspapers, radio and films. All India Radio provided programmes to meet the educational needs of the people

in addition to entertainment. The various newspapers, specially those in local languages, contributed considerably to the education of the adult population.

Although Government played a major role in promoting social education in the country, the role of voluntary organizations should not be overlooked. In fact, it is recognized in all quarters that adult education and social education should be promoted through voluntary effort in order to make it effective. The Indian Adult Education Association, as stated earlier, took a lead in providing a forum of field workers and administrators to discuss current problems of the field at the Annual National Seminars. The subjects selected for the seminars indicate the change in the emphasis given to the programme from time to time. It held seminars on organization and technique for the liquidation of illiteracy in 1950, organization of community centres in 1951, literature for neo-literates in 1952, training of social education workers in 1953, recreational and cultural activities in social education in 1954, libraries in social education in 1955 and social education in rural reconstruction in 1956. The reports and recommendations of these seminars along with presidential addresses of annual conferences provide a study in the trends of thought and practices in the field of adult education and social education. Activities of voluntary organizations at the State level included promotion of training of literacy classes, etc. To this must be added the valuable work that was carried out by various private organizations, such as Gandhi Smarak Nidhi, Kasturba Memorial Trust, Gandhigram, Visva Bharati (Sriniketan), Belurmath and many other voluntary educational organizations. As stated earlier, very little record is available of the work of local efforts in the field during the first plan period. If these efforts are grouped together, it would indicate a comprehensive coverage of the programme and the awareness of the need for its extension.

**The Second Five-Year Plan.**—In the second plan period the activities of social education were relegated further to a lower priority. Rs. 5 crores were allotted for social education in the

Central sector out of Rs. 307 crores for education in the total plan of Rs. 4800 crores. In addition, Rs. 10 crores were provided for social education in the national extension and community development programme. The State Plans provide for the opening of literacy and social education centres, training of social education workers and organizers, libraries, publication of literature, audio-visual education and establishment of *janta* colleges. The plan makes an interesting observation on social education as follows:

"The census of 1951 showed that only 16.6 per cent of the population were literate and even if children below 10 years are excluded the proportion raised to 20 per cent only. Apart from the lower percentage of literacy there is serious disparity in literacy between man (24.9 per cent) and women (7.9 per cent) and between the urban population (34.6 per cent) and the rural population (12.1 per cent). Rapid social and economic progress along democratic lines and widespread illiteracy are scarcely compatible with each other.

"While literacy is undoubtedly important, it should be recognized that it is one element in a wider concept of social education. Social education embodies a comprehensive approach to the solution of the problems of the community, primarily through community action. Besides literacy, it includes health, recreation and home life, economic activities and citizenship training. The entire national extension and community development programme, social welfare extension projects, rural programmes undertaken by Government agencies in co-operation with the people, programmes of voluntary organizations like the Sarva Seva Sangh, the Bharat Sevak Samaj and others, the co-operative movement, village *panchayats*, etc. are all facets of the nation-wide effort towards social education and rural improvement which is now in progress in the country. From this aspect the range of social education work is not to be judged merely by the financial provisions made specifically under this description. However, as an organized and systematic activity directed to specific purposes, social education is a new field of work. A large number of development agencies

are engaged in some form or other of social education. Their work has to be supplemented by suitable specialized agencies. The beginning made in this direction in national extension and community project areas has, therefore, much significance. A period of careful evaluation will help to determine the nature of specialised agencies and methods and techniques needed in this field, both in rural and in urban areas.”<sup>9</sup>

The community development programme was extended further in the Second Plan. By the year 1959-60 it had covered 3 lakhs villages in 2064 blocks in Phase I and 843 blocks in Phase II for each block of 100 villages and 66,000 average population. Rs. 70,000 are provided for social education for a period of five years in Phase I block and Rs. 50,000 comes to nearly Rs. 18 crores.

In each block, as in the early years, services of two functionaries, one of social education organizer and the other of *mukhyasevika* are provided. In the initial years the emphasis was laid on integrated role of S.E.O. in promoting the minds of the villagers for receiving the various programmes of extension and acting as a liaison between the villagers and the extension workers. The role of influencing ideas of villagers for education and social education is in itself a difficult task. Added to it the role of an interpreter and a liaison worker makes it more difficult. Possibly because of this emphasis that the S.E.O. experiences heavy weather in the initial stage, it is being realized in recent years, that every extension worker is an educator in his own field of knowledge. In changing the existing practices among people he has to utilise the method of social education. To a limited extent, thus, every extension worker is a social educator. The S.E.O. and the *mukhyasevika*, therefore, have to perform the specific role of promoting specific activities of education and social education. Even if they try to fulfil their ‘integrated’ role, they are not likely to cover the total population of the block. Either they should select, as in the case of *mukhyasevika*, a limited number of villages and concentrate the effort on the promotion of social education activities; or they should

<sup>9</sup>Government of India, Planning Commission, New Delhi: *Second Five-Year Plan*, 1956, p.517.



work at the block level through a selected channel of communication and concentrate on a selected number of activities to be promoted through local organizations. It is this realization which gave emphasis to (a) training of *gram sahayaks* as resources for promoting community development; and (b) promotion of youth groups as organizations for carrying out the activities of social education.

**The Panchayati Raj.**—The introduction of the *panchayati raj* as a system of organization for the promotion of community development movement in rural areas in recent years has necessitated adjustment in the activities of social education as in the case of other programmes. The introduction of the *panchayati raj* as a system of “decision-making”<sup>10</sup> through the *panchayat samitis* and the village *panchayat* and its functional sub-committees for community development in rural areas has provided an additional and very important source of education for citizenship. Democracy bestows certain benefits, responsibilities and privileges on every citizen; the benefit of law and order, freedom of expression and association and the right to vote; responsibilities of putting in practice the essential tenets of democracy and co-operating with Government in achieving measures of welfare; and the privilege of maintaining vigilance on the rights of man and the proper functioning of administrative machinery in the interest of the community. The *panchayati raj* provides the facility to the citizen to associate actively with the working of the *panchayat* and the *panchayat samiti* as the units of Local Self-Government at the village level. It offers facilities to the villagers to participate in the promotion of development directly in the *gram sabha* and indirectly in the *panchayat* and *panchayat samiti* through their representatives. This facility to educate the villagers in the art of citizenship through participation is one of the most effective forms of education in citizenship. It has the potentiality of bearing lasting results. Although this will not be easily achieved in the initial stage, the

<sup>10</sup>Meher C. Nanavatty, “Progress of Self-Determination and Dynamics of Panchayati Raj”, *Kurukshetra* (May 1960), VIII, 7, pp. 7-10.

very process of realization of its importance would become an experience in social education.

The new set up of *panchayati raj* has highlighted the need to differentiate the "institutional approach" from the "activity approach" in the promotion of social education. The programme of social education and adult education can thus be divided into:

- (1) social education promoted through the effective working of social institutions, such as the family, the caste, the religious organizations, etc. in the rural areas;
- (2) social education generated indirectly through the promotion of community development movement and directly through the work of community organizations, such as the youth organization, the women's organization, the farmers' organizations, etc.;
- (3) social education, specially education for citizenship resulting out of working of the *panchayat*;
- (4) social education promoted through the village school;
- (5) adult education programme through literacy, libraries, reading rooms organized in the villages and through the extension education promoted by various extension organizers in the fields of agriculture, animal husbandry, cottage industries, etc.;
- (6) social education promoted through recreational, cultural and social activities.<sup>11</sup>

As indicated earlier various functionaries of community development programme contribute to the promotion of social education. Every extension worker, including V.L.W., on the one hand and the B.D.O. and collector on the other, are social educators, as promoters of community development in a limited sense. The *mukhyasevika* while working with children, women and the family and the school teacher in the school are important functionaries of social education. In addition, the panchayat extension officer and the panchayat secretary, although new-comers to the field, are a

<sup>11</sup>Meher C. Nanavatty, "Social Education under Panchayati Raj", *Kurukshetra* (October 1960), IX, 1, 52-54 and 56.

vital link in the programme of citizenship. The school teacher and the sub-inspector of schools as promoters of adult education programme through the village school and the community centre have their own contribution to make. The social education organizer promotes directly the social education through associate organizations, especially the youth organization and through various training programmes for *gram sahayaks*. He tries to promote activities of adult education, recreation and cultural development through these organizations. From this point of view, the total programme of social education is formidable. It is a synthesis of the effort of different functionaries and organizations in the field of community development.

In terms of the physical achievements from 1956-57 to 1959-60, 608 lakhs have been spent on social education in 115,000 adult education centres, training 33 lakh adults and the organization of 61,000 *gram sahayaks* training camps, covering 28 lakh *gram sahayaks* besides the establishment of a large number of libraries, reading rooms, youth organizations and women's organizations and community centres. In addition, Rs. 290 lakhs have been spent by the State Directorates of Public Instruction for promoting social education in respective States. As in the Second Plan the figures of expenditure and the coverage of services are extensive.

The voluntary organizations continue to play their vital role in promoting social education activities. The Indian Adult Education Association continued to organize national seminars annually on vital topics, such as Administration of Social Education, Community Organization for Social Education, etc. etc. During the second plan period, experiments were made in promoting adult schools established in urban areas for those adults who are desirous of achieving a certain level of learning. The experiment of adult schools has proved effective. It is hoped that in the rural areas the Government as well as the voluntary organizations will promote extensively adult schools established among industrial workers.

**Use of the Method of Community Organization.**—With the adoption of the three institutions, namely the *panchayat*, the co-operative and the school, as basic organizations of community

development and with the introduction of the system of *panchayati raj*, the role of community organizations both basic and associate came to the forefront. This in turn influenced the field of social education. Efforts are being made to promote community organization as an integral part of social education programme. A seminar was organized at the national level to discuss community organization for social education. With the adoption of the method of community organization with the necessary adjustment for the promotion of social education, the field is likely to swing further to the field of social welfare. This should interest the social welfare workers as they utilise the method of community organization along with the method of social case work and social group work on an extensive scale. Community organization as a method can be used for promoting the social education in three different fields; (1) social education as an under-current of the process of community organization; (2) community organization for promoting the community development wherein social education is a part; and (3) community organization for promoting primarily the programme of social education.<sup>12</sup> It is true to say that community organization as a method of focussing the attention of the members of a community to its welfare and of relating the energy of all concerned to its development, carries with it the element of social education. It is in itself a process of finding individual satisfaction in the fulfilment of the needs of the community. Social education thus becomes an under-current of community organization. In addition, community organization as a method of community development provides at different stages and at different levels facilities for the promotion of social education among the members of the community, through the activities of extension workers, the youth organizations, the women's organizations, the *panchayat* and the co-operative. Community organization as a method can also be used specifically for promoting social education activities, such as literacy campaign to focus the attention

<sup>12</sup>Meher C. Nanavatty, "Social Education through Community Organization", *Indian Journal of Adult Education*, (October 1960), XXI, 10, pp. 34-37.

of the members of the community to the need for literacy in the life of every citizen. Care should be taken, however, to ensure that (a) the need is felt by the community; (b) the attention of the whole community is focussed on the programme; and (c) the organizational and promotional set up are such that the energy of every individual and organization is harnessed in the interest of the whole community. To indicate specifically the use of community organization as a method for the promotion of social education is not to neglect effectiveness of the methods of working with groups and with individuals. It is only meant to indicate the recent emphasis in the field. The group method is already in use extensively in promoting recreational and cultural activities and for the organization of youth and women's groups. Individual contact has proved most effective in relating the attention of the individual to the programme.

**Training of Social Education Workers.**—The training of field workers continues to remain on an *ad hoc* basis. Earlier, the period of training was of three months, later it was extended to five months. Recently the training of men and women workers has been separated. The period of training for men workers (S.E.O.s) is of six months in addition to six weeks of orientation training in community development with other extension workers. The contents of job training include studies in (a) rural communities and their characteristics, the rural community; (b) dynamics of human behaviour; (c) methods of working with people; (d) the *panchayat*, the school and the co-operative as basic institutions of the community and the role of voluntary organizations; (e) leadership training; (f) youth welfare; (g) social education, the new concept; (h) methods and materials of social education; (i) programme of social education; and (j) administration of social education programme. The training of women workers (*mukhya sevikas*) covers three important areas of studies; (a) social welfare, including child welfare, women welfare and family welfare; (b) home economics including mother and child care, home management, food and nutrition, health and sanitation; (c) the role of women in rural occupations including agriculture, animal husbandry and cottage

industries; (d) role of women in the *panchayat* and the village community. The duration of training is of ten months and a half. Both these training programmes are geared to the requirements of the field. By its very nature its organization is *ad hoc*, both in terms of its content, duration and administration. It is for consideration how best such courses of training can be geared to the basic training programme of rural workers which can be promoted by universities and other educational institutions as an integral part of the total scheme of education. Training to be effective has to be placed on a permanent footing, so that the steady flow of trained workers is made available to the field on a continuous basis according to the requirements. The whole area of training requires further consideration.

**Report of Evaluation.**—Although various evaluation reports have been made on the subject during the last seven years, it was for the first time that a picture of the total work of social education in the background of community development was drawn by the team for the study of community projects and national extension service appointed by the planning commission in 1956-57 under the chairmanship of Shri Balwantray G. Mehta. The committee had made recommendations on the programme and training of Social Education. Some of them are:

(a) The aim of Social Education should be (i) to acquaint people with the meaning of citizenship and the way democracy functions; (ii) to induce citizens to learn how to read and write; (iii) to impart proper training for refinement of emotions; and (iv) to instil tolerance among citizens.

(b) The service of S.E.O. should also be utilised in developing public opinion against social evils.

(c) Special staff at district and state levels may be provided to render guidance to S.E.O. and a separate section under the Joint Director (SE) opened in the Department of Education.

(d) The S.E.O. should identify potential village leaders and assist them in accepting the responsibilities of leadership in improving community life.

(e) Village leaders should be enlisted in the effort to impart social education.

(f) Village teachers may be utilised by S.E.O. in their programme of work.

(g) S.E.O. should seek the co-operation of members of co-operative societies and the progressive villagers to join them where they do not exist.

(h) S.E.O. should pay increasing attention to youth clubs and encourage village youths to participate in specific projects of work.

(i) Literacy programme should be drawn up separately for men and women after a preliminary survey of adult illiterates, and camps and intensive drives organized extensively in all blocks.

(j) Lest neo-literates should relapse into illiteracy, follow-up programmes should be worked out.

(k) Circulating libraries of suitable films should be maintained by the States. Each S.E.O. should have a projector and a regular flow of films and know how to operate a projector. Subsidised radio sets should be provided to the villagers.

(l) The candidate S.E.O. should possess a university degree, experience in practical social work being considered an additional qualification. Age limit may be kept between 20 and 35 years.

(m) The period of training should be extended to one year.

(n) S.E.O. should be given training in the art of working through others particularly through school teachers, members of co-operatives and *panchayats*.

(o) In the present syllabus emphasis should be shifted from job orientation method to items like administration, co-ordination, democratic planning from below and technique of group planning and action by officials and non-officials.

The Sixth Evaluation Report of the Programme Evaluation Organization (P.E.O.), Planning Commission, which has studied intensively the programme of social education observes as follows: These observations are the result of the study conducted in 18 blocks and 14 non-block areas. It indicates the impact of social education programme on community development.

1. "Majority of the respondents (65 per cent) had no understanding of the aims and objectives of the social education

programme; of the 35 per cent who had some understanding, only one-fifth had good understanding.

2. "A high proportion (69 per cent) of the respondents in the ages 30 and below had a good understanding of social education, as compared with 20 per cent for all the respondents. The caste composition of the respondents in a block seems to have little relation with the extent of understanding of social education among them. But this is related significantly to the extent of literacy among the respondents.

3. "Those who participated in the adult literacy classes or community centres have a better understanding of social education than the general body of villagers.

4. "The percentages of respondents having progressive views on social questions are almost uniformly higher in the blocks than in the non-blocks areas. Similarly, the leaders in the block villages appear to be more progressive than the general body of respondents, and also their counterparts in the non-block areas.

5. "Further, on almost all issues, more of the literate among the respondents in the block and the non-block areas have liberal views than the illiterate. Again, in a good number of instances, the low-caste villagers have higher percentages having advanced attitudes than the high caste.

6. "If allowance is made for the differences between blocks and non-blocks areas in respect of the two significant factors, literacy and caste composition, the special contribution, if any, of the social education programme to the progressive outlook of the villagers in the blocks is considerably reduced.

7. "The participants are, as one may expect, ahead of the non-participant in their views on all the listed social issues. But there are more literate persons among the participants and in view of the high gap between literacy and understanding of social education, it is difficult to ascribe to the programme as such a significant role in moulding their views.

8. "The evidences are not all in favour of the literate persons having more advanced views than the illiterate on social questions,



but they are sufficient to lend support to the inference about the influence of literacy on a person's views and attitudes. It is the extent of literacy among the village people rather than the social education programme which seems to be much more the important factor influencing the outlook of the rural people."

As stated earlier in the Introduction, the studies on social education available in the fields are few and far between. Even the P.E.O. study referred to earlier is a reflection of the study of 18 blocks in the total coverage of more than 2,500 blocks. The sample was too inadequate to generalise any conclusion. It is, however, necessary to emphasise the need for a comprehensive study of social education. A beginning needs to be made by selecting a limited geographical area and to study the various sources of social education, both Government and non-Government influencing attitudes, values and customs of the people. Such a study alone can help the field in knowing the total impact of social education programme on the people.

**Future.**—The year 1960 was the year of preparation for the Third Five-year Plan. It gave an opportunity to study the development of the field during the last 10 years and reflect on the future. As stated earlier, the present and the future are just relative expressions in planning. The future is the continuation of the past and the present, of course with some modifications. This is one of the unavoidable limitations of planning, and social education is not an exception. In the Draft Outline of the Third Plan only Rs. 5 crores are provided for social education from the provision of nearly Rs. 400 crores for education in the total plan of Rs. 10,000 crores. The amount for social education has stayed steady in all the three plans although the size of the plan has enlarged every time. The priority is rightly given to Universal Primary Education in the education sector of the plan. The major part of Rs. 5 crores to the extent of Rs. 3.5 crores will be spent on continuation schemes, Rs. 1.5 crores will be available for development in the Central sector. Besides, the provision for social education in the community development programme will continue as before. It is proposed to

cover the total rural areas of the country with community development by the end of 1963 in 5,000 Blocks. Each block is being provided with Rs. 70,000 in phase I and Rs. 50,000 in phase II of five years each for the programme of social education. The State Governments are trying to provide for libraries and audio-visual aids in the State sector of the plan. Under the circumstances, it would be correct to assume that the Government resources for social education programme will remain more or less the same as before. This leaves the field with the question of re-organizing the available resources to their very best. There is also an opinion prevalent that in addition to the large amount of funds available from Government sources, a corresponding amount should be collected from people to promote social education and the resources so made available should be utilised effectively by re-organizing the total programme. The re-organization should correct the limitations experienced in the past and lay the foundation of future development on a sound base. Some of the following suggestions emerge as a result of the analysis of the trends of development made throughout the chapter earlier.

(1) **Differentiate the Field of Education.**—The field of adult education as observed earlier in assuming a big role of social education has lost its own mooring. It is, therefore, necessary to differentiate the field of adult education from that of social education. Social education covers all age groups, specially, the children and the youth. Its influence is derived more from social institutions and social organizations, such as the family, the caste, the neighbourhood, the school, the local community, the *panchayat*, the co-operative, the youth organization, the women's organization, the work group, etc. It is primarily concerned with the promotion of social values, the adjustment of individuals to society and the changing of anti-social practices. It is the resulting force of the impact of many social forces working in society. Whereas the field of adult education covers certain age groups and has specific responsibility to fulfil in terms of (a) remedial education for those whose education was neglected; (b) continuation education for those whose education was interrupted; and (c) further education

for lateral transmission of knowledge in technology and fine arts. To suggest the separation of the two fields is not to imply that they are incompatible. In fact, they are allied fields of learning. If we study the trend of development during the last fourteen years since independence, we will find that by giving global dimensions to the field the workers get involved in a maze of expectations that the field has created for itself. Every aspect of human life is expected to be attended by the field worker under one cover of social education. When the resources of men and women are limited, such a universal coverage is both misguiding to the public and harmful to the systematic development of services. The suggestion to differentiate the two fields is merely to simplify the work of field workers. It is necessary, in addition, to phase the targets of achievement in periods of five years each in the field of adult education. Social education being all pervasive finds it difficult to limit itself. It should, therefore, be considered as an under-current of the process of life. Certain educational forces can, however, be strengthened and others generated to promote the process of social change.

Once the above suggestion is accepted, it will be easy for each field to specify its programme.

## **(2) Programme of Adult Education in Rural Areas.—**

(i) *Primary Education.* In the country with 70 per cent of illiterate population, the programme of literacy should assume first priority if the necessary receptivity of the adults to formal learning and the necessary resources for promoting services are available. Experience of the last several years, however, reminds us that whereas every year three per cent of adults are made literate on an average 40 to 50 per cent of school age children, who go without primary education, continue to add to the already large army of illiterate population. It is, therefore, necessary to give first priority to the programme of universal primary education, so that at least in the next generation, it will be possible to have a very high percentage of literate population. It is also easy and less costly to provide primary education for children than adult

education for adults. It should be the duty of every adult education worker and social education worker to help every family, specially in rural areas, to send their children to school. This in itself should form an important part of the programme of adult education and social education.

(ii) *Continuation Education.* After recognizing the need to provide universal primary education for all children in the age group 6 to 11, it is necessary to provide facilities of continuation education for the children who complete primary education. For sometime to come, there will not be enough resources in the country to provide universal middle-school education. The very fact that the Constitutional Directive of providing universal free education to the age group 6 to 14 years has been lowered to 6 to 11 years is a recognition of the limitation of resources. Under the circumstances, attention needs to be given to the age groups 12 to 16 and 16 to 25, both for providing continuation education to those who have completed primary education and for creating in the adolescent and the youth interest for work life. Primary education is the general type of education. Thereafter, if the child goes to a secondary school, he may be provided with bifurcation of academic and field interests. But with very limited percentage of children attending secondary schools, specially in rural areas, there is an urgent need for providing them with interest in work life so that they become good workers. Educational activities may begin by providing on a part time basis opportunities to children to get interested in the use of tools; they must also get acquainted with different crafts. After the interests are developed, regular training in crafts with the help of local craftsmen needs to be promoted in addition to general knowledge. As the resources are limited, these activities could only be carried out in village schools at an informal level, particularly after the school hours.

Adolescents and youths require: (a) competitive pursuit; (b) creative expression; and (c) recognition by the adults and the community. In the programme of informal education there should be a happy blending of these activities. The facilities of extension training centres, village farms, post-basic schools, production-cum-

training centres, etc., should be made available for promoting this programme.

In the present context of things, this programme is similar to the orientation of adults to work life. Under the circumstances, this should be considered as a part of adult education programme, and the necessary resources should be made available from adult education funds.

(iii) *Literacy around Craft and Trade*. The programme of literacy among adults has not succeeded as much as it was expected. There are many reasons. One of the main reasons is that to a hungry stomach literacy does not bring food. Unless it is woven around occupation, it is not likely to succeed. We need to reiterate the recommendation of the Preparatory Committee of the Indian Adult Education Conference made in 1938. "The trade of the individual should be used as much as possible as the base of all literacy work, so that literacy may be a natural expression of an inward need and not merely an artificial growth grafted on the exterior of the human mind." Much remains to be done in this area, specially in the preparation of literature for neo-literates and in the methods of teaching adults. The age group 16 to 25 needs to be concentrated upon as a priority, both in view of their receptivity and the limitations of the resources.

(iv) *Co-operation and Panchayati-Raj Movements*. In promoting the programme of adult education, specially literacy, reading rooms and library, the agencies of co-operatives and *panchayats* need to be used effectively. It was observed in 1928 by the Royal Commission on Agriculture in India, that there should be intimate connection between the literacy movement and the co-operation department. The department should encourage the adult education activities among its members systematically. With the introduction of *panchayati raj*, the programme of adult education becomes the responsibility of the *panchayat*. If it creates the necessary atmosphere of learning among adults, and supervises the programme effectively, adult education can make much headway in rural areas.

(v) *Library and Reading Rooms.* With the introduction of universal primary education, it is necessary to provide libraries and reading rooms in every village so that continuation of reading interests may be maintained. Similarly, with every literacy class, library and reading room should be considered as an essential adjunct of adult education. A systematic programme of circulating books in villages with the help of central libraries at the block and district levels needs to be worked out. There would be enough funds available for the purpose in the third plan if the resources are pooled together. But in the main, the organizational arrangement both of low-cost printing of books and timely supply of books should be effectively worked out.

(vi) *Women's Education.* There is a need for systematic programme of promoting adult education among women in rural areas. The experiments of "condensed courses", conducted by C.S.W.B. have proved successful and need to be promoted on an extensive scale. It will provide a two-fold advantage, namely, (a) promotion of adult education among women; and (b) providing of woman teachers and village workers to further girls' education and women's welfare.

(vii) *Audio-visual Aids.* Although radios and films are used extensively mainly for entertainment and for collecting audience, its use is not made on selective lines. The educational effect is not allowed to be permeated at the deeper level of learning. It is, therefore, necessary to utilise both these media more selectively according to the stage of receptivity of the adults. These media should be used more, through small groups followed by discussion. In addition, other indigenous aids of *bhajan*, group singing, drama should be extensively used for promoting adult education.

The emphasis on education through audio-visual aids should be laid on making adults conscious of their responsibilities and duties as a member of the community, specially as a parent, worker and citizen. A systematic programme of exposing them to new ideas in their specific interests should be worked out.

With the spread of communication and transport, the media of information and exchange of ideas will naturally spread. It will

carry with it the need to be selective of the ideas that are useful. This very process of selection of ideas and information should be effectively promoted through the programme of adult education. Methods of discussion, reading and contemplation should be effectively used.

(viii) *The Village School and the Teacher.* In view of the limited number of educated workers available in rural areas, the village school teacher will have to be recognised for some more time to come, as the main worker for promoting adult education. Although his primary responsibility should continue to be of primary education, he should be increasingly involved in promoting the programme of adult education. The scheme of developing the village school into a community centre carries with it the possibility of relating the school to the village community. The school should become a centre of all educational demonstration in different fields. Although this is an ultimate objective, a beginning had to be made with a number of activities, such as reading room, library, literacy class, radio, film, etc. Care needs to be taken to ensure that the programme of children's education, instead of getting adversely affected, becomes more meaningful and wholesome. With the spread of universal primary education, there will be more than one village teacher to share the additional burden of adult education. The regular teacher's training programme should include training in community development, specially adult education and social education.

(ix) *Major Responsibility to Voluntary Organizations.* In promoting the programme of adult education, major responsibility should be entrusted to voluntary organizations, the Government agency giving suitable grants, encouragement and guidance wherever required. The present trend of Government assuming greater responsibilities directly replacing even the existing voluntary organizations needs to be reverted. Voluntary organizations by their nature of direct, personal, informal contact with the people have greater potentiality to promote the programme on effective lines.

(3) **Programme of Adult Education in Urban Areas.**—Although some of the programmes suggested above are applicable

to urban areas, care needs to be taken to relate the programme to urban requirements. Some of the salient features to be considered are: (i) in urban areas, adults are becoming more conscious of the need of learning not only for their children but also for themselves, as compared to rural areas. They are receptive to formal learning. Recent experiments of adult schools have proved beyond doubt the usefulness of such a scheme. Every metropolis, city and town should promote this programme on systematic lines, (ii) there is a large population of youths and adults in urban areas who could not complete their studies at big schools and colleges are eager to continue their studies while they work. Facilities of continuation education need to be provided for them on a part time basis by the directorates of education and the universities, (iii) with the development of industrialization a large number of youth and young adults require some training in different technical subjects while they continue to work on semi-skilled jobs. All of them cannot afford to go to technical institutes. A part time programme after office hours in technical training is required. (iv) In industrial cities, employers should be held responsible for promoting education among adult employees. As suggested earlier in 1940 by the Central Advisory Board of Education, the question of levying a tax on these employers who do not make adequate provision for the education of their employees, should be considered in all seriousness and suitable legislation prepared for its enforcement.

**(4) Programme of Social Education.**—(a) the programme of social education should be effectively promoted at five different levels, namely, (i) the family; (ii) the school; (iii) the youth organization, the women's organization and other voluntary organizations; (iv) the co-operative and other economic organizations and work groups; and (v) the local bodies, specially the *panchayat*, the *panchayat samiti* and the municipality. The necessary atmosphere and public opinion should be created for its effective promotion. As Dr. Ranganathan suggested earlier, social education for (a) restoration of harmony in the total development programme: (b) social education for the above normal with



emphasis on civic sense, ethical standard and spiritual corrective should be systematically promoted.

(5) **Training of Workers.**—The present *ad hoc* training at all levels should be replaced by regular training as an integral part of the system of education. Universities and other institutes of learning should take more active interest in developing a body of knowledge of adult education and social education, and should promote a systematic course first at the certificate or diploma level, and later as a part of graduate and postgraduate studies. That in itself will raise the standard of learning. Leadership of thought which is required in the field needs to be provided by institutes of learning.

(6) **Study and Research.**—As indicated above, a systematic programme of study and research, both at basic and applied levels, should be promoted by universities and other research institutes and organizations.

Adult education and social education are young fields in our country. They need to be nurtured with care and sympathy both in relation to its body of knowledge and its application to the field. It can only be achieved by the joint efforts of voluntary and Government organizations, field workers and administrators, universities and research institutes.

## CHAPTER

# 17

### *Tribal Welfare*

B. H. MEHTA, Ph.D.

**India's Indigenous Population.**—Very little is known about the aborigines of India. Ancient Indian history mentions the Dravidian and Aryan peoples. The Vedas describe the existence of a people in India who could have been Dravidians or perhaps pre-Dravidians. The identification of the race to which they belonged or the determination of the location of their ancient habitat has proved to be difficult. The story of migrations and movements of the early people has not been written, and little evidence has been available to justify the conclusion. The Indian Anthropologist, Sarat Chandra Roy, in the study of the Mundas of Bihar and also the Oraons, gives a general account of the Aryan contacts, interactions, associations and conflicts with some tribal groups. They may have belonged to another race which Roy calls the Kaularians, or they may have been some groups of pre-Dravidians. It is generally accepted that the population of India contained Negroid, Astrolloid and Mongoloid racial elements. But the continuous mixture of races during thousands of years leaves little justification of definite conclusions.

British anthropologists and administrators were interested in these tribes. Men like Hutton, Reeves, Russel, Enthoven, Hislop and others tried to know a good deal about them; and Grierson brought an insight into tribal dialects. These studies which were mainly ethnological, were inspired by the prevailing interest in anthropology at that time. All British anthropologists did not belong to the Mallinowski school which has a deep and sympathetic understanding of primitive peoples; and who believed in permitting their self-development in their respective and natural

habitats. Among anthropologists and administrators, there were both humanists and imperialists, and some of them were scientists. The purely scientific interest in the tribal population of India was not universal.

There were two important developments which are significant. Christian missionaries started work in many areas inhabited by the so-called tribal groups. In some cases there were serious conflicts between the missionaries and the tribals. The missionaries had a religious and humanitarian approach. The East India Company and the later British Government had to deal with tribal populations. For political reasons, important tribal groups participated in the Indian Mutiny of 1857. The Bhils especially, took a leading part in this national struggle.

As British administration covered the entire country, it became necessary for them to deal with remote mountainous and hilly and forest areas inhabited by many tribals. The administration of tribal areas and kingdoms naturally became a serious problem for the administrator. On the whole, there was a desire to leave the tribals alone in their isolated and undeveloped homeland, and at the same time law and order had to prevail. Meanwhile, German experts were summoned by the British to study the forest problems of India. They laid down plans for the protection, preservation and exploitation of selected forest areas. Forest departments came into existence, Forest laws were enacted, and policies were laid down. In many areas the Forest departments were given charge of the entire administration; but in some cases, as in Assam the tribals were left alone. A policy of minimum interference with tribals and almost self-government was followed on the Satpura Mountains and in the Narbada Valley of Madhya Pradesh.

Attempts have been continuously made to answer two basic questions. Who are the tribals? And what is tribalism? The Census Reports of 1901 made an effort to deal with these problems; and a greater interest in these problems was shown by the 1911 Census Reports. The Census of 1921 attempted to go deep into the problems of definition and classification; but evidently could not reach definite conclusions. The 1931 Census attempted to deal with the

confusions of the 1921 and previous Census Reports; but reliable data were not available owing to political conditions in the country. On the whole, all the Census Reports to date have not been able to reach conclusions, regarding the definition and classification of tribes and meanwhile, conditions have been changing so rapidly that the search for deeper knowledge may never be completed.

The Census Reports have dealt with aborigines, primitives, animists, primitive tribals, Hinduised tribals, jungle tribes, etc., and thus, merely emphasised problems created by history and acculturation; they do not help the definition or classification of such groups. Meanwhile, the studies of Castes and Tribes were carried out in almost all the Provinces and in important Indian States. Most of these were mere ethnological studies and they did not throw much light on the living conditions, problems or needs of the tribal people.

**A Historical Background.**—Mahatma Gandhi took a human as well as a political interest in the tribal problem and desired to introduce among them far-reaching reforms in terms of his general philosophy and ideology, emphasising social equality and human dignity.

In Gujarat, where Gandhiji wielded great influence in the twenties and thirties, the tribals had come to be known as *kaliparaj* or the black population. The upper castes called themselves *ujliparaj* or the fair people. Those who accepted the message and programmes of Gandhiji called themselves *varjals* or the purified ones; and the tribals who did not give up drink and meat were called *sarjelas* or the destined ones. Before this division could have far-reaching social significance, the term *raniparaj* or forest dwellers came into existence parallel to the term, harijan which came to be used for the untouchables. It was at this stage that Independence was achieved and the term *adivasis*, meaning original inhabitants came to be used to identify the tribal population, along with *vanya-jati* or forest dwellers.

The early Census Reports were not able to deal with the problem of tribal population satisfactorily; but, on the whole, the

Census of 1921 devoted itself to a dispassionate study of the early population of India. The Censuses of 1931 and 1941 were unsatisfactory; but taking the results of all the Censuses together, and providing for a normal increase of population, there should have been a population of about 26 million in 1951; and at present, it could have been about 30 million, a figure mentioned in the last Science Congress. But the President's Schedule of Tribes classified about 17,00,000 persons as belonging to the Scheduled Tribes in 1947, and the Scheduled Tribes list modification order mentions the population as 22,524,506. The same order has declared 604 tribal groups as Scheduled Tribes.

Two schools of thought with contradictory approaches have appeared in India. One school believes that the largest number of persons who deserve to be called tribals should receive the benefits bestowed on them by the Constitution. They hold that all those who were called aborigines, primitives, animists or tribals of any kind should be included in the Schedules. Another school holds that tribalism gradually disappears due to acculturation and assimilation, and, therefore, only those who continue to remain primitive or suffer isolation from the rest of the people of the country should be recognized as tribals in the Schedule of Tribes. The living conditions of such people should approximate to primitives, and in some minds primitivism and tribalism appear to be almost synonymous.

Several committees and efforts have been made to deal with this problem; but the Government seems to be reluctant to increase the number of tribes or tribal groups in the Schedule; and they are unable to reduce the number or remove certain tribes, and especially, parts of tribes from the Schedule. Meanwhile, on account of improved communications, greater mobility of population, spread of education, expansion of urban areas and industrialization, and greater interaction between social classes, castes and groups, the processes of acculturation and assimilation continue to eliminate tribalism at a much greater speed than before. Indeed, anthropologists hold that assimilation should be accepted as completed. The

only States where primitivism and tribalism yet prevail to a large extent are Assam, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh and Bihar.

**Who are Tribals?**—Difficulties arise because of the use of the term, tribal. The tribe is a distinct type of social organization, and it has played a significant role in human history. It is often accepted as the origin of the nation. Hunter's definition of a tribe is acceptable in many ways. According to him a tribe descends from a common biological, mythical or legendary ancestor; it occupies a defined territory; it has a common history; the tribe speaks a common dialect; and it is invariably endogamous. No reference is made to the economic life or occupation; or to animism or other aspects of its religion or culture.

It is not difficult to classify a tribe according to known characteristics of primitive civilization. Tylor, Durkheim, Westermarck, Mallinowski and others have explained in detail the characteristics of primitivism. The isolation of a primitive group in mountainous and forest areas; the prevalence of animism and a primitive mentality; a simple economic life involving gathering, hunting and fishing; a type of social organization involving authority, leadership, and enforcement of custom and tradition; primitive marriage which is a free and transient union; the existence of a tribal dialect without a script; and characteristics of primitive culture evident in food, dress, housing, singing, dancing and other contents of a rich folklore are all significant characteristics of small and isolated primitive communities which live in defined small or large physical areas.

Primitive civilization does not continue when such human groups come into contact, associate with, inter-act, or are conquered by other perhaps more socially and culturally organized and developed groups. Then acculturation follows and significant social changes take place. All this may not be recent, as the Vedas and later Sanskrit literature explain the inter-action, both hostile and co-operative, between primitive and non-primitive civilizations. However, in India some tribal groups have continued to live isolated or partly isolated from non-tribal groups upto the present day.

**Isolation.**—Isolation is a vital social phenomenon. It may be

sometimes absolute, but invariably it is only a relative isolation. Physical isolation is significant in tribal areas of Assam, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, and Orissa.

The tribals are isolated mainly in forest and mountainous areas of Central India, or the South-eastern and Eastern Himalayan regions. There are two different theories to explain this isolation in undeveloped, but sometimes very rich natural areas. One is that the conquering groups drove away the tribals from their lands to this so-called inhospitable regions; and the other theory is that primitives live and have always preferred to live on the mountains and near forests rather than on the plains. Their food habits, economy, social organization and culture suggest the relative correctness of the latter theory, though some tribal groups may have been driven to less hospitable regions by later conquerors.

**A Conquered People.**—Perhaps more important than isolation is the factor of conquest. The earliest conquests may have been inter-tribal, and large and strong tribes may have fought against weaker tribes. The Gonds, Bhils, Santals, and such large tribes who occupy very large regions could have grown and developed on account of conquest. It is difficult to ascertain the original homeland of these tribes. The Aravalli Hills may have been the original homeland of the Bhils, and the Gonds may have originally belonged to Andhradesa or the Narbada Valley. Bihar, Orissa, Bengal, Assam, and even Burma constitute a long chain of tribally populated areas.

**Feudalism among Tribals.**—Then there are historical conquests or other forms of inter-actions between tribal kingdoms and Rajputs, Muslims, Marathas, British, etc. Invariably, the tribals retained their independence, aided by the advantages of geography and isolation or the benefits of tribal cohesion, and their capacity to deal effectively with non-tribals. But the chief result of these conquests and consequent inter-actions is the emergence of what could be described as “feudalised tribals” or the emergence of tribal chiefs, kings and kingdoms.

An interesting insight into the history of small tribal kingdoms was recently obtained by the Department of Tribal Welfare of

the Tata Institute of Social Sciences on the highlands of the Satpuras where these almost independent feudal tribal groups had enjoyed near freedom till 1947. These little kingdoms were in near proximity to the larger tribal kingdoms of Deoghar and Nagpur, and the important kingdoms of Mandla and Bastar. There are large and small kingdoms of tribals in Assam where Chieftainship is more evident, and the legal ownership of land has been shared by the entire community. The city of Ahmedabad was once the seat of the tribal kingdom of Ashavel. It is not too difficult to distinguish the two distinct groups of "primitive tribals" and "feudalised tribals" with their more advanced dialects, land ownership, crude forms of government in which the State structure is evidently performing simple functions, and greater political, religious, and cultural acculturation with the upper brackets of Hinduism, and even of Islam. The Bhils accepted "Goho" the cave-born son of a Rajput as their king; and it is significant that some Gond Chieftains called themselves "Shas" as a result of their contact with the Muslim rulers.

**Tribes of the Rural Areas.**—It was inevitable that feudalised tribes should eventually come into greater and direct contact with the plains and the rural population of India. Communications developed, however slowly, and tribals began to take advantage of railways. Economic inter-action began and developed gradually. The British system of land ownership, both Zamindari and Raitwari, and moneylenders were greatly responsible for the economic defeat and gradual ruralisation of tribal communities who became mere Sudras and agricultural landless labourers in areas ruled by the British which were dominated by Hindu castes and other stronger social groups. When a tribal population is thus ruralised, it forms a part of the normal mixed rural population of any area. It is always useful to note the strength of proportion of tribal and non-tribal population in such areas; and the manner in which acculturation rapidly takes place and becomes a complex social phenomenon. The tribal has descended from the hills and emerged from the forests into the plains. His early animism and religious life which consisted of beliefs, faith, and forms of worship



are gradually acculturised with the prevailing pattern of Hindu beliefs and rituals. Dominant characteristics of Hindu social structure and organization successfully weaken and eliminate the old tribal social order, and small village communities, without integration, and even tribal castes come into existence. The forms of marriage, ceremonial and family life change radically. The economic status of such a ruralised tribe is low, many tribals are only landless labourers, and some own land and also cultivate lands belonging to other farmers. Other aspects of the life of ruralised tribes depend upon opportunities non-tribals are willing to give or leave to tribals, and cultural assimilation leads to the loss of values of the original tribal culture. Dialects, skills, and creativeness, all these suffer and are sometimes totally lost. The separate identity or the tribal personality is no longer there, and perhaps they are no longer necessary. Thus, one more group of ruralised tribals is added to the previous two important groups of primitive tribals and feudalised tribals. It is important to note that tribal feudalism is able to assert itself as long as tribals form the bulk or majority of the population of predominantly mountainous and forest areas. Ruralised tribals appear to have migrated to the plains in search of land and work, and they are invariably found to form a minority in the total population of the area.

**Migrations of Tribal Communities.**—Migrations and extensive movements of tribal populations have naturally played perhaps as important or even a more important role in tribal history than isolation or conquest. There are no records of tribal migrations and mobility. But the Gond tribe one of the largest in India, is now found in seven States of India. Gonds are especially found in Andhra and Madhya Pradesh. The Bhils are found in Rajasthan, Gujarat and Maharashtra. Tribes of Southern and Eastern India have also moved about considerably. The earliest movements must have been due to tribal wars and economic and climatic reasons. Later movements were due to invasion of tribal territory, pressure of non-tribal population on tribal areas, famines and similar calamities, and the gradual preference given by tribals to agriculture over hunting and animal husbandry. In innumerable instances

when a section of a tribe emigrated to another area, it seems to have accepted another name. Perhaps the Kois thus changed their name to Khond or Gond. Many tribes in Western India could have been originally a part of the large Bhil tribe. It is evident that a small fraction of an immigrant tribe will easily yield to the process of acculturation. The weakened and depleted part of the tribe in the original habitat will now also be acculturated, especially if other contacts develop, or the emigrant group retains contact with the original habitat.

**Totally Assimilated Tribals.**—Migration has contributed one more important type of tribals, and that is the tribal population of some important urban areas. A large section of the tribal population of Ahmedabad city is working in the textile industry. Likewise, there is a large tribal population in the Iron and Steel city of Jamshedpur. The steel town of Bhilai is closely associated with a major tribal area. Another migration trend has contributed a large tribal population in many mining areas of India, especially as these mines were in or near tribal areas. Tribals work in coal, manganese, and iron mines. Perhaps in such areas both disintegration and acculturation take place most rapidly, and the tribal population is assimilated or absorbed in the heterogeneous urban population. They took to urban ways of living. The last group of tribals may, therefore, well consist of "assimilated tribals".

A question arises whether it is correct or advantageous to add the word tribal as an adjectival noun to lead to the naming and the classification of groups as primitive tribals, feudalised tribals, ruralised tribals, assimilated tribals, etc. The use of the word tribal can only be justified if a distinct social organization with a definable social structure performing social functions is in existence. It is significant that the tribe as a social organization has gone through long periods of social change, and in most cases, with few exceptions, the separate identity of this social organization is hardly possible. Perhaps the word tribal could have disappeared, but for the Constitutional provisions made for the benefit of such groups, and the adoption by Government of the policy of creating a Schedule of Tribes.

It is appreciated that the social objective behind the creation of the Schedule of Tribes was idealistic and humanitarian and was conceived as a measure of social justice for those who were bracketed with the so-called backward classes who lived in undeveloped areas. A certain recognition of unidentified aboriginality is also implied, and, therefore, privilege is conferred on them in repayment of historical debts following the precedent of the privileges and compensations paid to descendants of Red Indians in the U.S.A.

It has not always been appreciated, but it must be firmly emphasised that the Scheduling of tribes and castes has no relation whatsoever with the inferior social status which has been associated with untouchability. Even the concept of backwardness does not truly apply to the tribal, and their backwardness is only apparent because they have different culture and ways of living. It is true that the caste has emerged as an element of social organization among the tribes, due evidently to acculturation; but it is hardly necessary to add the words "and Castes" to tribes, thereby creating an implication or a possible inference which is not at all justified.

There has been another traditional, but objectionable use of the word, tribe in India. This is the naming of certain groups in India by the British Government as criminal tribes. There is no historical evidence to show that entire tribes were criminal at any time. Criminality may appear in the individual, or organized groups of criminals may appear in any society for various reasons. There are no criminal tribes in India at present, as the Government of India by legislation does not recognise any human group as criminal. But the stigma is often found to remain, and even terminology like ex-criminal groups prevails. All this has been most unfortunate; and while it is true that ex-criminal groups exist at present, the use of the word tribe should always be considered wrong, undesirable and objectionable. This problem has been dealt with more extensively in an article published by *The Indian Journal of Social Work*.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>B. H. Mehta, "Ex-criminal Tribes in India", *the Indian Journal of Social Work*, XVI, 1, (June 1955).

**Tribal Religion and Hinduism.**—The Census Reports of India in the past raised an issue whether tribals were and are to be considered as Hindus. The authors of the reports were Britishers who had failed to appreciate and understand the origin and evolution of Hinduism and Hindu society in India. There could have been an aboriginal population in India which has not been identified collectively by any name. Then there were the Dravidians in the South, and later on Aryans immigrated into India. The problem of race is not introduced here for argument. The word, Hindu was first used probably in the twelfth century by Muslim foreigners. It is a word of Persian origin, and it is a foreign word used by strangers to identify collectively and name a people and land they came across. By usage the word came to acquire a complex connotation. Thus, Aryans, Dravidians and likewise, therefore, the pre-Dravidian population by usage came to be generally known as Hindus.

Hinduism is a way of life and a continuous social order. It is, therefore, the name of a large, widely distributed and heterogeneous society. It has come to embody the historical life process of the entire land from times immemorial. The philosophy of Dravidians and Aryans, Vedic philosophy and the contribution of numerous Hindu philosophers are all embodied in Hinduism as a whole. Hinduism has never been a single religion with narrow and limited historical doctrines and associations. It has known many prophets, several holy books, and temple architectures and religious organizations of many types. *Dharma*, properly understood is a universal concept which applies to the whole of humanity. It is associated with Natural Laws and changing and rational moralities. A Hindu can be an atheist or an agnostic, and beliefs and forms of worship have varied extensively over several thousand years. Aryan groups and the Vedic religion may have come in conflict with Animism with its primitive beliefs and forms of worship of the tribal population during some period of ancient history; but the Atharva-Veda, one of the four main accepted religious documents of the Aryans is a chronicle of the beliefs and forms of worship of the tribal population or the primitives of that time. The tribals

and non-tribals were thus reconciled at all times, not only in terms of religion but also socially, politically, and culturally. Some periodical local conflicts may have been there; but likewise friendship and co-operation between the tribals and the Aryans, Rajputs and other Hindus have also been recorded in history. Tribal kingdoms continued to exist in India till the eighteenth century and even later. All tribals have shared the history of India. They have known invasion, conflicts, and exploitation; and they have suffered social injustice and indignity. All this is a part of Indian history, feudalism, subjection to Imperialism, and the growth of capitalism and industrialization under British rule. To a foreigner there may be an academic interest in the interpretation of Hindu-tribal relationships; and at times this interest seemed to serve the purpose of Imperialism and narrow political interests. So far as the people of India are concerned, the tribes are a great and important unit of the entire Indian population the bulk of whom has been known traditionally and universally as Hindus, especially during the last five hundred to a thousand years.

Whilst a number of British administrators had taken a scientific interest in the tribals of India, and a number of missionaries, both Christian and Hindu, had taken interest in their welfare, it has already been stated that a new approach to these problems was owing to the personal interest of Mahatma Gandhi in their welfare. The late Shri Thakkar Bapa devoted his whole life to their welfare, and his interest and efforts were shared by members of the Servants of India Society. Owing to the political movements which began in 1921 for the freedom of the country, the interest of the country was not confined to the general welfare of the tribals, but the economic conditions and political problems also came to receive very special attention. Separate organizations created to achieve the welfare of separate tribes, and the Bhil Seva Mandal was foremost among them. Gradually, organizations were created in the States of Maharashtra, Assam, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Orissa, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, and even in some States which did not have a large tribal population.

**A New Approach after Independence.**—Special Articles were

introduced in the Indian Constitution after Independence in order to safeguard the welfare and interest of tribals, and a Schedule of Tribes was created naming 212 Tribes which were officially recognised to be tribals. Not only were tribes Scheduled; but Scheduled Areas were created in terms of compact physical areas which were chiefly populated by tribal communities, though non-tribals lived amongst them.

Since Independence, the chief programmes for the welfare of tribals related to the construction of new roads in tribal areas, the provision of drinking water, attention to major diseases like leprosy, yaws, and V.D. which prevailed among them, the creation of *ashram* schools and providing scholarships for education, and the development of village industries. The most needed programmes for forest development and promotion of agriculture were not given adequate emphasis and priority, though forest labour co-operatives were created in small numbers in a few places. The major burden of welfare activities were borne by private welfare agencies, and their voluntary workers, aided by State fund, but after Independence, Departments of Tribal Welfare were created in a number of States, especially which had a large tribal population. This emergence of State efforts has naturally created the vital problem of co-operation between State and private agencies.

**Community Development Projects in Tribal Areas.**—The Community Development Projects were started in the rural areas as a result of the First Five-Year Plan. In the early stages the tribal areas were not selected for these projects, and anthropologists and private agencies alike were somewhat worried about the application of the philosophy, objectives, methods, programmes, and feasibility of creating a new administration in such areas. However, a decision was reached, and community development projects were initiated in 1955. The Government of India realized the difficulties and importance of such projects, and, therefore, gave special advantages and privileges to such Blocks. Financial provision was made for a Government of India contribution of Rs. 15,00,000 per Block from funds available for tribal welfare, and

the State Governments agreed to contribute an additional amount of Rs. 12,00,000 per Block. Tribal Development Blocks in India have certain distinctive features. They are geographically extensive in area, communications are invariably not adequately developed, the population is small, emigration is a serious problem, and the rate of increase in population does not conform with the prevailing trends in the rest of India. 46 multi-purpose projects have been started in tribal areas during the Second Plan period, and an expenditure of Rs. 108 per head of population was sanctioned to be expended during a period of five years.

#### **Distinctive Characteristics of Tribal areas in Rural Regions.—**

This new approach and programme has created an interest in the problem of differences between tribal areas and rural areas. A rural area is generally described as an area which is not an urban area. The Valley Section theory and the science of regionalism has classified the human habitat into six major types of physical environments, namely (1) Mountains and forests. (2) Grasslands. (3) Plains. (4) River-valleys. (5) Shores. (6) Deserts. Primitive tribes invariably inhabited the first type of region. Their economic life was closely related to forestry, and tribes later on became victims of poverty due to imperialism or foreign domination when they ceased to remain primary agents for the utilisation and exploitation of the forest areas. A tribe invariably lost its homogeneity and social integration when it became nomadic on the grasslands. Unable to live in forests and grasslands, many tribes took to what is known as *jhum* or shifting cultivation, a primitive type of agriculture. When conditions of feudalism brought settled conditions to the tribes in India, even when they were conquered by non-tribals, they did not normally take to rice and wheat cultivation because the hilly and forest areas were not suitable for such crops. They, therefore, developed millets and coarse cereals which have remained their staple diet for centuries.

**The Tata Institute and Tribal Welfare.**—As an institution devoted to the welfare of all sections of the population, the Tata Institute of Social Sciences took some interest in the problem of tribes immediately after Independence. A group of students agreed

to receive training in rural and tribal welfare. At that time, in the absence of the development projects, it became difficult for them to find employment; but they were soon placed in positions of leadership and importance. Shri Dubey who had proved one of the most successful social education organizers, was sent abroad, and is now associated with the research programme of the Central Institute of Community Development at Mussoorie. Miss Govind has played a prominent role in the project at Etawah in Uttar Pradesh and is now a lecturer; and Shri Datta is a Labour Officer in the Oil Industry at Digboi in Assam where many tribals have been employed.

When Community Development Projects were introduced in tribal areas, the Government of India assigned to the Tata Institute of Social Sciences the task of giving an In-Service training to senior workers in the Department of Tribal Welfare in all state and private agencies in India. Since 1956, 73 officers have been trained from the States of Andhra, Assam, Bihar, Bombay, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Madras, Manipur, Mysore, Orissa, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tripura, etc. 26 more officers are under training at present.

The training is not merely academic, and a field headquarters has been created in the heart of India, among the Gond tribe, on the highlands of Central India in the Chhindwara District of Madhya Pradesh. This is also a research centre, and experimental projects as well as pilot projects have been undertaken in a 550 square mile area which is inhabited by a population of 40,000 tribals.

Along with programmes of community development, the most important items connected with the social aspects of community life are welfare programmes for women and children, and concentration on educational problems of tribal children. The chief objectives of community development relate to the economic development of the region and the tribal communities. All the above four subjects, namely, Community Organisation and Development; Women and Child Welfare; pre-basic, basic and post-basic education of children; and the development of tribal economy in terms



of forestry, agriculture, and tribal crafts and village industries are intensively dealt with in the Tamia Multi-purpose Community Development Project in Madhya Pradesh.

Pilot Projects for woman, child and youth welfare have been undertaken in co-operation with the Indian Council for Child Welfare and the Social Welfare Board. Educational experiments are carried out with the co-operation of the various departments of the Government of Madhya Pradesh. Practical programmes for the development of forestry, rehabilitation of shifting cultivation, and improvement of agriculture in selected areas are executed in co-operation with the Community Development authorities and the Extension Services.

While field training is provided to officers and students for five months in the year, a full-time staff is maintained at the Field Headquarters for direction, administration, supervision and research purposes. Foreign students from Burma, Ceylon, Ethiopia and the U.S.A. have taken advantage of this training and field programme. Intensive research programmes have been carried out continuously during the last five years. These include a preliminary survey of the area and its 187 villages; a socio-economic survey of about 2000 families; a survey of the problems of women and children, a survey of the utilisation of forest products; a survey of the water scarcity problem in the area, and survey of climatic and weather conditions.

But more important than the above investigations and surveys, has been a continuous research and study of the major problems of community development in tribal areas. These include a study of the problem of selection of areas for intensive development; the problem of right approach to tribal communities in terms of the philosophy of community development; a critical study of the aims, objectives and priorities of community development in tribal areas; a study of the programme of preparation prior to development; the problem of the role and co-ordination of State departments, private agencies, and tribal communities in programmes of community development; the problem of personnel for community development and training of local workers for leadership

and management; and the problem of impact and consequences of community development programmes on tribal life. This study especially deals with the problem of acculturation, assimilation and integration of tribal life and culture with national life.

The results of this research programme are being recorded and are to be embodied in a report which will be ready as soon as the period of development of the Tamia Project comes to an end. The research has been accompanied by the use of the camera and several thousand feet of 16 mm. films have been taken to demonstrate the nature and problems of community development in tribal areas.

**Objectives of Community Development in Tribal Areas.—**

There is evident sincerity in both Central and State Governments to achieve the general welfare of tribals and the rapid development of community economies. But sincerity of purpose has to be accompanied by clarity of aims, so that defined objectives can be achieved not only by the Government, but by the people themselves. The objectives and aims of community development will be somewhat different in nature and degree of emphasis on the different aspect of community life, and programmes will, therefore, also differ in terms of priorities and requirements of resources in most tribal areas. In recognition of these obvious differences, the special projects have been called Multi-purpose Projects; and more resources have been made available to them in order to achieve the objectives within a short period of time. Three fundamental aims seem to determine the broad objectives of community development in tribal areas.

A large number of tribals live in physical regions which have common characteristics. They are invariably some of the most undeveloped rural areas, and they are isolated from the rest of the country because of the mountains and forests. Roads have not been constructed; there is severe scarcity of water, and as there is the absence of the railway in the proximity, the economies of the region have remained undeveloped. In spite of these factors, there is a great possibility of regional development for economic purposes because of the presence of natural resources in such areas. Thus,

Regional Development is and should be one of the chief aims of community development projects in tribal areas.

Another fundamental aim is the development of tribal economy. A highly developed tribal economy is likely to be complex because of the possibility of a variety of programmes. The forests still offer opportunities for hunting and gathering economies even if they are reserved and protected forests. Poultry farming has an immense scope in most tribal areas, and in selected areas there is scope for breeding goats, sheep, pigs, ponies and horses. Cattle breeding and animal husbandry have little scope in tribal areas because water is inadequate, the region is hilly and hill grasses have peculiar characteristics. All these factors lead to a lesser milk yield; and besides there is less scope for the meat trade because the people in the surrounding areas are vegetarians.

Tribal areas have developed shifting cultivation and a type of agriculture that is peculiar to the tribals. Soil conservation, land and irrigation problems are severe in tribal areas, and a major objective is to develop agriculture in terms of the opportunities of the region, and bring tribal agriculture on a level with the advanced stage and methods now prevailing in other rural areas. Because of the high altitude, good rainfall and presence of hills and valleys, there is great scope for the development of seed culture, medicinal herbs and plants, horticulture and vegetable gardening.

In tribal areas, social objectives naturally receive a prominent place owing to the historical evolution of the tribal problems of feudalism, domination by non-tribal feudalism, and physical occupation of tribal territories by social, economic and political organizations foreign to them. However, the goal of national integration cannot be imposed on tribals. Opposing the social forces of integration are newly developed forces of tribal self-assertion in Assam, and as witnessed by the Jharkad Movement, happenings in the Bastar State, and the assertion of independent existence and the wish for non-interference in the Abuj Mahal area of Madhya Pradesh. If national integration which has already been preceded by the rapid elimination of tribal dialects and programmes of

tribal welfare are misconceived or improperly implemented, then the trend of social change may lead to the re-emergence of tribal consciousness, and a demand for the recognition of special needs, rights and privileges. The presence of special representatives of tribals in Central and State legislatures could itself lead to the emphatic assertion of tribal demands. Class and caste have already penetrated tribal society; but original tribalism was accompanied by physical occupation of defined areas on which tribal history thrived alongside the achievements of non-tribals. Tribalism was actually a positive nationalism on a small scale.

The influence of feudalism of tribal areas was not advantageous to the common people; it helped foreign domination with the help of a power-and-land owning class among the tribals themselves who allied themselves with the conquering and dominant groups to the detriment of the independence and interests of the vast majority of tribals. The acceptance of the Rajput born King Gohu by the Bhils of Western India was symbolic of the great change in tribal society that such an acceptance of suzerainty implied. The king was crowned with the blood of a Bhil which was applied to the forehead of the new chief. In this manner historical co-operative interactions took place and they accept the principle of sacrificing the weak in the interest of the strong.

The aim of national integration is now freely associated with the broad objectives of social assimilation. Normally, social assimilation is voluntary, unconscious and gradual. Any attempt at speedy assimilation may actually lead to a desire for social imposition. From this point of view the objectives, programmes and working of the multi-purpose projects need to be carefully studied. The development authorities and other inadequately trained personnel of the Community Development Projects at times seem to be unaware of the consequences of their actions. Seeking progress, economic development, national integration and social assimilation, they find themselves surrounded by an intelligent, active, strong population that may feel the need of self-assertion in terms of latent historical and cultural elements. All this may of course lead to an addition to the national complications which are inevitable

in a nation somewhat dominated by a sense of urgency and haste. Therefore, the aim of community development in tribal areas must be well conceived. They must be implemented by a leadership with deep understanding not only of the true principles of community development; but also of the history, traditions and aspirations of the tribal people.

Anthropologists, in the past suggested a policy of non-interference in reserved areas in order to allow primitive tribals to live according to their wishes in habitats which are free of any kind of foreign domination. This policy is no longer suggested by most of them because of three reasons. In the first instance, the period of acculturation has been very long and therefore unconscious and inevitable assimilation has taken place. Secondly, social forces operating in the world after the industrial revolution have been so powerful, that they become irresistible even in areas and amongst people who desire to remain unaffected by them. Thirdly, the development of communications has been rapid and extensive, and once a geographical region is opened up by railways, roads and automobiles, then all other forms of communication follow; and new ideas, education, and commerce make the isolated existence of tribal culture almost an impossibility.

It is, therefore, desirable to intelligently respond to the forces of change, and create patterns of development which will be truly in the interest of those who are exposed to all kinds of modern social forces. Under the circumstances it is desirable to give the highest priority to the systematic development of the physical region, especially the forests, grasslands and valleys in the case of the tribals in India. The development of the region will contribute to the improvement of economic conditions and economically advanced communities who can become agents for the development of advanced economies. In order to achieve the fundamental aims stated above, it would be the proper policy to develop place, man, and economy with the priorities established in that order.

**The Population Problem, Tribal Village, and Village Communities.**—The problem of tribal welfare and regional development is difficult because of reasons not easily realized by those who are

not familiar with tribal life. In a large number of cases the physical area inhabited by the tribals is very large, and the population is small. For example, in case of the Tamia project, it is 550 square miles when the population is 38,000. Besides, this population is not always a fast growing population as in other parts of India. As amongst the Todas, where the population may have ceased to grow, the population may be actually decreasing, or increasing at a slow rate.

Centuries ago, primitive tribes seem to have had the practice of living as separate individual families within a large tribal area. Even today groups of families live at a distance of one to two furlongs apart. However, at a later stage, they came together to live in small hamlets which contain a cluster of ten to fifty family huts. The majority of hamlets in the Tamia Project area, as in many parts of India where tribals live, are of this type. They are known as *dhanas*. There is a distance of a quarter to half a mile between two clusters, and between two to as many as seven clusters, make up what is called the village by the Revenue authorities. Tribals function as a cluster integration. Research has revealed that at times a whole cluster was related by kinship. The group is physically and emotionally integrated, and intense co-operation exists within the small group. But among the different clusters forming a whole artificial village, there is not only a lack of co-operation, but traditional hostility may even be in existence among some clusters. One cluster within the same village may be at the top of a mountain, another on a small plateau, and yet another in the valley. Sometimes, there is only one source of water supply between several clusters. The water problem becomes a source of conflict. High and low social status of cluster leaders, land ownership problems, troubles on account of unapproved marriages cause friction and conflict.

If community development has to be successful, the achievement of integrated and manageable physical villages should receive close attention, and a priority has to be given to create new settlement plans to develop village communities. Unless there is a proper village in existence, headmanship, medical assistance,

organization of pre-schools, basic schools, and community welfare activities become very difficult. Real community development can hardly follow unless communities are organized, with capacity for providing leadership, initiative and management for the promotion of good community living.

**Administration in Tribal Areas.**—Real *panchayats* do not function even in name in the Tamia Project area and among many tribes in India. The so-called *panchayats* are made up of illiterate tribals who do not possess abilities to express themselves, and poorly educated non-tribal land owners and money-lenders who were somehow elected before the community development organization came into existence. Unless there is village consciousness, local leadership, and a number of effective community workers, community consciousness, and the capacity to manage community life will not easily develop.

Perhaps for many centuries the tribes had their own chiefs, social organizations and tribal assemblies to manage their own affairs. The Rajput, Muslim and Maratha rulers had invariably avoided interfering with or penetrating deeply into tribal areas. Of course, there was occasional fighting, and tribals often recognized an overlord or paid a tribute to some conqueror. The British Government were disturbed by the participation of some tribes in the so-called Indian Mutiny of 1857. The policy of maintaining law and order in the whole country led to a policy of minimum interference in tribal affairs and the setting up of some kind of administration. The real emergence of an administrative unit in remote tribal areas followed the policy of Forest Reservation and the systematic exploitation of forests as advised by two German experts who were invited to assist the British Government. In the early stages, the Forest Department performed almost all the functions of the Government, including those of the P.W.D., Health, Education, etc.

Based on the philosophical approach of Law and Order, and seeking commercial and economic gain, irrespective of the wishes and needs of forest tribes, the Forest Department almost universally earned the hostility of tribals from the very beginning. The

system of Forced Labour or "Begar" continued till the Government of India endorsed the abolition of the system on the suggestion of the League of Nations. A survey in 1929 had revealed that an entire village, after the abolition of forced labour, was paid Rs. 10/- a year for rendering compulsory assistance to the Forest Department. Even now the wage levels in the forest areas are extremely low, are irrespective of the kind of labour and hard work performed by the labourer, and in some States the collector of a district has the right to fix the wage of private citizens working in forest villages.

Other departments were created to follow the Forest Department as new functions emerged, and there were the Police, Revenue and Excise Departments. These too are departments merely concerned with law and order. Activities of the Health and Education Departments were absent and limited, and, therefore, a Department of Tribal Welfare was created for the service of the people. The multi-purpose community development projects have, therefore, contributed to the largest expansion of administrative personnel in tribal areas in known history. The administration is new, there is multiplication of departments; co-ordination of departmental efforts has hardly been achieved, and the recruitment, fitness and training of the personnel will take many years to improve.

With the new objectives of tribal welfare, there is an evident need of an integrated administration with a common philosophy of service and assistance to the people who must be organized and allowed to make their own efforts for total development. The new administration has to be identified with real interest of the region and welfare of the people; and there must be dedication to duties which have to be performed in natural surroundings amongst a simple, intelligent and active people who have different ways of living. Even, at present, the personnel is inadequate, communications are undeveloped, and only skeleton transport facilities are available for the use of the entire administrative personnel. For example, in an area of 550 square miles covered mainly by forests, the Forest Ranger has no jeep to carry out his



difficult duties in a 300 square mile forest area. In tribal areas a new administration is being created; it will have to work and grow on right lines to achieve the common objectives of peoples' welfare, efficient administration, and regional and community development and national integration.

**Complexities of Regional and Tribal Economy.**—The very recent Elwin Committee Report, and a series of Reports by surveyors and committees have pointed out the importance, complexities and difficulties of developing the economy of forest covered, hilly, and undulating lands. All these reports have failed to emphasise the gravity and intensity of problems, and the high priority that should be given to the complete re-evaluation of forest laws, policies and programmes. The philosophy and objectives of the community development administration have to prevail in distant forest regions over the nineteenth century concepts of developing forest regions mainly in terms of exploiting timber irrespective of the needs and welfare of the forest people. A new forest policy must establish that the achievement of forest development must be compatible with the welfare of tribal communities living in these forests. Besides, the forest communities themselves must be intensively prepared for and associated with every kind of programme of forest development.

Twenty-three per cent of the entire land area of the nation is covered by forests. The existing tribal population may perhaps be found inadequate, if real and intensive programmes of soil conservation, forest protection, afforestation, protection of wild life, scientific re-allocation of lands for suitable purposes, water and irrigation development, drainage, and full utilisation and exploitation of all major and minor forest products are to be carried out in the entire forest area. In most places there is lack of leadership; and inadequacy, insecurity, and inefficiency prevail among the personnel of the forest departments. Five years of intensive study of a 300-square mile forest area has revealed that six successive forest rangers were assigned duties during a period of years in the same area. None of them had the vision, will or capacity to understand and keep pace with the rapid but mecha-

nical progress envisaged by the community development administration. The latter was in great haste, and with greater resources and some plans for execution and development, and some kind of direct contact with village communities some progress has been made but the forest administration was woefully slow, had totally inadequate resources, and had inadequate planning and leadership, personnel, and transport facilities. It had no real and co-operative or educative contact with the tribal communities.

Economic poverty, as it prevails among the tribals at present, is mainly due to the law-and-order mentality and militaristic approach and exploitative policies that persist in the forest administration. Human relations are totally neglected in distant forest areas which are always away from the gaze of public opinion and healthy criticism. Public relations have developed along wrong lines and dark memories affect the minds of the simple mountain and forest dwellers. It is surprising that in certain States a vast forest area has no plan or resources when in the same area multi-purpose projects with vast resources are introduced without any real co-ordination of efforts with a planless forest department. Along with the community development administration, a new chapter of integrated planning, execution of intensive geological and botanical surveys, a systematic organization of Forest Extension Services, and close co-operation and co-ordination of economic activities pertaining to forestry, horticulture, agriculture, animal husbandry, and poultry farming, and revival of tribal arts, crafts and industries, and the co-operative organization have to be quickly conceived to achieve the full benefit of these highly developable tribal areas.

The history and nature of the land problem is different in some of these tribal areas compared with the rural economy of non-tribal communities living on the plains. A re-allocation of land for forest purposes, shifting cultivation in a few areas, patch cultivation in forest areas wherever possible, the systematic development of suitable and economically useful grasses on the slopes and meadows, introduction of extensive horticulture and vegetable gardening in the irrigated valleys, removal of agriculture and re-

afforestation of lands which are naturally eroded are preliminary steps which should accompany the earliest stage of community development in tribal areas. The Forest Department too must have a plan, and this plan and its implementation machinery must be co-ordinated to the economic programme of multi-purpose blocks: The Elwin Committee has suggested a block allocation for economic development of tribal areas; but it is not specifically stated that this programme should include a contribution to the development of forest economy.

There is a personnel, however small, for Extension Work in tribal areas; but there is no Forest Ranger on the staff of a Community Development Administration where 60 per cent and more area of the block is covered by forests. There is a complete absence of a forest extension service to help the people to promote forest development programmes on systematic lines.

Even the development of agriculture in tribal areas is far more difficult because the traditions and know-how of tribal areas are quite different from the traditional agricultural practices of the plains. Problems of water, irrigation, and drainage are very severe. The undulating lands and different types of soils and sub-soils demand intensive and separate attention within very small areas.

While prices are soaring, wages are 50 per cent to 100 per cent lower than the wages of the landless labourers and artisans in non-tribal areas. The demand and supply of labour is erratic, and forest and agricultural labour are disorganized by the sudden priorities introduced by the community development administration without a proper study and knowledge of economic conditions. The tribals are co-operative and quick to respond to new ideas, but not only they, but the Community Development Administration and the Extension staff are themselves bewildered by the changing priorities and policies at the top, and the changing emphasis given to "grow more food", "Co-operatives and Service Co-operatives", "*Panchayat* Organisation and planning from below", etc. Tribal areas should be allowed to grow and develop slowly and gradually to achieve firmly established objectives and well conceived programmes which are simple and standardised in the initial stage. They must be

achieved systematically according to the capacity of the hastily recruited, hastily trained and inadequately paid staff. The tribals have the unique ability to quickly observe and imitate worthwhile achievements and efforts of a few successful areas because they have initiative, maturity of mind, and keenness to escape the isolation and exploitation which have been the lot of the majority of tribals during the present century.

**Education in Tribal Areas.**—Whilst programmes of community development have given a new direction and trend to the welfare of tribals and a beginning has been made to deal with areas and tribal communities more thoroughly than ever before, the nature and quality of achievement cannot be ascertained at present. Some kind of community development administration will remain permanently and will be absorbed by rural administration; but the permanent efforts will have to be made by the communities, and their own leadership, and *panchayats* will have to carve out their destinies after the external elements have withdrawn or have been absorbed in the general administration. The permanent development and social programmes of tribal communities, therefore, will depend on the reorganization and changes that can be quickly introduced in the educational system of tribal areas.

During the last five years, the Tata Institute of Social Sciences has given deep attention to educational problems and needs. Experimental programmes of pre-basic, basic, and post-basic schools have been carried out. Efforts have been made to create a proper environment and atmosphere for educational institutions in tribal areas. The problem of recruitment and training of teachers has also been given consideration.

An important experiment has been made in the Tamia Project area by the introduction of compulsory education. 70 new teachers have been employed and 40 new schools started in spite of the fact that there were no school buildings, and new teachers had no residential facilities.

The Elwin Committee Report has rightly pointed out that for some years to come education of tribal children must be according

to basic education principles and must remain closely associated with the development of forestry and agriculture. Besides, some important defects of the present system of education must be eliminated. At present, education prepares the child for success outside the tribal areas. Thus, education de-populates an area which is already under-populated, and drains away its quality population. An emigration of the most capable male section of the youth after completing an eight years' education deprives the area of its prospective leadership to such an extent that the success of community development programmes is jeopardised; forests are left to be exploited by non-tribals; and agriculture is mainly left to be done mostly by women and older persons.

The language problem has been improperly dealt with in the past. Children did not receive primary education in their mother tongue. It is futile now to resurrect the tribal dialects of even the most important tribes like the Gonds and Bhils. The present policy, wrong as it was in the past, has to remain permanent. This policy of treating Hindi or the provincial tongue as the mother tongue proves distinctly disadvantageous to tribal youth when they receive any kind of higher education outside the tribal area in later years. Having no education in the mother tongue, and having common primary education in a second language they lack power of expression, and they have to think in several languages. It is, therefore, imperative to introduce multi-purpose middle schools within the tribal area so that tribal youth may leave their own areas only after completing a post-basic or high school. Then only a minimum number of capable and well-to-do boys will go to the town or city for secondary or higher education.

The greatest single handicap of the entire education programme, as has been already pointed out, is the small size of the village community; and therefore, only a small number of children attend a village basic or primary school. A one-teacher or a two-teacher school with three to five classes cannot successfully implement a basic education programme or lead to the improvement of quality of the eight-to-ten-year education programme, only four of which are a part in the village itself. It is, therefore, desirable to maintain

boarding schools for boys and girls on the pattern of Ashram schools; but with far greater emphasis on work, manual training, and the simultaneous development of brain and finger skills. Schools in mountain and forest areas should be permitted to have a suitable and separate syllabus and curricula for class-room work, practicals in workshops, and field work to learn the elements of forestry and agriculture. At least, Re. 1/- a day is needed to provide minimum nourishment in boarding schools.

Recruitment of teachers has considerably improved, but there should be greater recruitment of teachers belonging to tribal communities. Special training institutions must be created to prepare teachers for basic education, and the new curricula needs to be prescribed for tribal areas.

It is realized by experience that a bifurcation programme is necessary at the end of an eight-year education in basic schools so that tribal youth may go to a special two-year institutional course which can prepare them for work and employment in their own area; or for receiving higher education later on. Rural higher education institutions should also be able to function successfully in tribal areas.

**Education for Girls.**—Special attention should be paid to the education of girls in tribal areas. At present, girls attend schools in villages in very small numbers. The better standards of life that community development may be able to achieve will not produce higher standard of general social health and progress unless all the sections of the community receive the benefits of education. At present, mothers bear the responsibility for economic duties and, therefore, most of the girls of seven to nine years of age have to look after the home. Hence they do not go to school.

Social education programmes in tribal areas have not been able to define clear objectives which can be achieved in tribal areas. The entire process of community organization and development is in itself an effective programme of social education. Social education programmes in tribal areas tend to become unconscious instruments of over rapid acculturation. Therefore, social education activities in tribal areas should make use of the already

well organized social, religious and cultural activities of tribal communities. Social education has the three-fold objective of improving the social organization of human groups to strengthen the existing integration of the small village community; preserve the strong elements and characteristics of tribal culture; and provide adequate facilities and opportunities for the development of new social and cultural values preserving intact the individuality and merits of tribal life and culture.

**Leadership for Village Communities.**—The task of building up a new leadership with vision, ambition, initiative, and energy to build up social structures capable of performing entirely new functions in the political and economic life of villagers is a difficult one. Results cannot be produced easily, and yet sufficient enthusiasm is present in all tribal areas among men and women to play an effective role in the life of the community as well as the nation. It is essential that leadership created from within is fully representative of the community, and is fully identified with the interest of tribals themselves. Leadership of reasonably educated tribals should be associated with a large element of leadership of tribal elders who can shape the destiny of village community even in spite of illiteracy; because they have objectivity, experience, common sense, maturity of mind, and sincerity of purpose to truly serve their own people.

**Medical Services.**—Medical assistance in most tribal areas is meagre, and a medical service is either non-existent or is fifty years behind the times in some areas. The problem of disease is difficult to deal with because of the absence of medical personnel and the unwillingness of doctors to work in tribal areas, the distances involved, the absence of communications, the small size in village communities, and the inability of most tribals to pay for medical assistance. The causes of diseases like yaws and leprosy which are widely prevalent in some areas have not been systematically studied. Malaria prevails extensively in some forest areas. Forest fevers, typhoid, and other fevers are generally prevalent. Even T.B. is prevalent where there is low vitality and malnutrition. Severe shortage of drinking water causes seasonal illnesses. Small

pox and chicken pox epidemics are common and at times virulent.

When the cause, nature and extent of disease is unknown, it is natural that preventive measures and active programmes for the promotion of health, fitness and efficiency should be practically unknown.

The problems of maternity, maternity welfare and family planning need very careful investigations, experimental programmes, and gradual development of maternity services along with child care. The Tata Institute of Social Sciences has been carrying out a very careful and intensive study of these problems in the Tamia area in order to study maternity in terms of history, tradition, and marriage. The existing methods of maternity care and the consequences of measures taken by the community itself need to be carefully studied and not regretted and the incidence of infant mortality and maternal mortality and morbidity need investigation.

Five years of experience and study in one area has again revealed that standard remedies and solutions cannot succeed in the entire country when the conditions prevailing are so entirely different in different places. If doctors are not available, a measure of medical relief is possible at least to deal with minor ailments. It is entirely possible to use the existing community development and social service personnel for some kind of medical relief in tribal areas. The tribals themselves have sometimes got very effective treatments for their ailments and traditional health difficulties. Certain standard remedies can be effectively provided when diagnosis is not difficult, and the ailment is of a general character. The care of drinking water, eradication of uncleanness, certain programmes of social education, and some direct assistance to the people to help themselves can create a small beginning if it is impossible to develop a programme of proper medical assistance for the tribal people.

A severe evaluation is needed of programmes of medical assistance provided along with the community development administration. The Tata Institute of Social Sciences, in the course of five years, has been able to evaluate the work in a major multi-purpose project. Medical officers must be carefully recruited and



selected and they must be imbued with the spirit of service and community development. The presence of mercenary doctors is irritating not only to the people, but to other members of the administration as they are also in need of medical care for their families. It has taken more than five years to create one primary health centre. When a young doctor was friendly and earnest, he lacked medical supplies for months together. The embarrassing processes of the finance department and departmental bureaucrats even come in the way of most urgent medical assistance. The mobile health service cannot be too useful over large areas when the vehicle is unable to travel over most of the area. However, the people appreciate this kind of service, and it is able to deal with minor ailments in a part of the region, but it is hardly effective in the monsoon. The mobile health van functions with inadequate co-ordination between medical assistance and social welfare extension and social education programmes. Greater planning, better organization, and more efficient management by reasonably well trained personnel can bring more results in terms of the present resources provided in a multi-purpose project.

Problems of emotional and mental health of persons, special care of health of children attending schools, and free medical service for personnel of the community development administration and extension services need high priority so that a proper foundation can be laid on which a standard medical service can be built later on.

## CHAPTER

# 18

### *Welfare of Denotified Communities*

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and

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THERE is a group of communities in India which has been stamped Criminal Tribes for nearly a century. It is only within the last decade that their name has been changed to Denotified Communities. The Criminal Tribes Act XXVII of 1871 introduced the term Criminal Tribes. And since then till the repeal of the Act in 1953, certain communities which were found to have been engaged in criminal activities as their hereditary means of livelihood were "notified" as Criminal Tribes. Immediately after the repeal of the Act they came to be called Ex-criminal Tribes. These terms were soon found to be disgraceful to the communities concerned and a serious handicap to the efforts of their rehabilitation. But the Criminal or the Ex-criminal Tribes are such a heterogeneous group of communities that it will not be possible to find any other name, except Denotified Communities, which would include all of them. The term, denotified is derived from the fact that under the Criminal Tribes Act these groups of people were notified as Criminal and with the repeal of the Act, their notification was cancelled. Hence the term Denotified Communities.

The origin and early history of these communities is only conjectural. There has been so much intermixture of various castes and groups that it is impossible to talk of their original ethnic groups. It is characteristic of these communities that they more

or less freely accepted members of other communities. Most of these communities, especially those from the north, such as the Bawarias, the Sansis, the Kanjars, the Banjaras, the Rajput Bhamptas, claim their origin from the Rajputs who married women of other castes. In the south the members of the denotified communities such as the Kaikadis, the Korvas, the Pamlores, the Bhamptas, the Vaddars, the Mang Garudis, the Bedars or Berads are composed of members of numerous backward classes of the region.

Perhaps the only common characteristic of all these groups is that they all indulge in criminal activities of particular types. Each of them has its own special crimes and specialized methods of committing them. Their specialization is so peculiar of the groups concerned that the police are more often than not able to trace a particular crime to a particular group on the basis of the *modus operandi*. Practical training in these activities is imparted from childhood. By the time the boy or the girl is twelve or thirteen years old the training is more or less complete and they accompany the elders on their criminal exploits. They have a strong social organization which rules their entire life. These organizations are responsible not only for the initiation but also perpetuation of crime in the communities.

These communities have been found to have taken to crime only when they could not live by honest means. The new economy with the introduction of new means of transport and other facilities has usurped them of their old occupations. Carrying grains and other supplies to the armies in wartime and to the people at other times, carrying palanquins, breaking stones, catching and selling birds and wild animals, making huts, keeping genealogies are some of the services which these communities performed for their livelihood, but are no more required by the society. When they had to give up these hereditary occupations, on account of illiteracy, backwardness and lack of any technical skill, they were unable to take up any other honest vocation. Ultimately, they took to the hazardous life of crime. Having once entered it, they have not been able to come out of it.

According to their mode of life these communities have been divided for the purpose of drawing programmes for rehabilitation, into nomadic, semi-nomadic and settled groups.

The nomadic like the Banjaras or the Pardhis are always on the move, with their families: they do not stay in one place for more than a few days or weeks. The semi-nomadic communities are those like the Kaikadis, Rajput Bhamptas, Chharas, Kanjarbhots and a large number of others who have a permanent abode in some place where they stay only for a few months in a year, while the rest of the time they are on the move with their families, ostensibly for some work. The settled communities are like the Bawarias, Kolis and Vaghris who have permanent abodes and they go out only for criminal activities or when absconding. It is evident that the denotified communities listed in the nomadic and semi-nomadic groups need a different treatment in so far as they are still wandering groups. In this respect they are like other similar communities which have not yet given up their wandering habits, although the latter are not inclined towards criminal life.

As we are here concerned only with the welfare of denotified communities, we need not consider the other nomadic and semi-nomadic communities. Before we touch the subject of their welfare it is necessary to understand the conditions in which they lived under the Criminal Tribes Act.

The existence of such common communities, living on theft and dacoity, was felt by the then British Government in the latter half of the nineteenth century, while dealing with the Thugs and the Pindaris. It was later found that the Indian Penal Code and the Criminal Procedure Code passed in 1860 and 1861 respectively were not sufficient to deter the members of these communities from criminal activities. Therefore, the Criminal Tribes Act XXVII of 1871 was passed by the Government of India. This Act introduced the principles of "notification" and "registration" of the criminal gangs, tribes and classes.

This was the first step taken by the Government to restrict the activities of the criminal tribes. Since then till 1953 when it was finally repealed, the Act underwent numerous changes, mainly

to impose more restrictions on these communities. The Act with all its amendments aimed at protecting the society from the menace of these people. Although it was recognized in principle that to get rid of the criminal activities of the criminal tribes it was necessary to settle them peacefully, the Criminal Tribes Act and the Criminal Tribes Settlements established thereunder worked primarily as a preventive and punitive measure than as a measure of reformation. It cannot be denied that the Criminal Tribes Settlements attempted rehabilitation to some extent, but rehabilitation was of secondary importance. It can neither be denied that there is a small section of these communities which has been settled as a result of their efforts. But taking into consideration the years of efforts and the amount of money spent on these settlements, the reclaimed population is a very small percentage of the total number. A major portion still has criminal inclinations. Much has been said and written about the ill effects of the Act and the Settlements. We will only touch the significant aspects of it from our point of view.

The rules and the discipline of the Settlements were so rigorous that whatever benefits offered in the form of employment and permission to live with the families were insignificant to the settlers and life was unbearable. Those who were outside the settlements lived a still worse life. The daily midnight *hazaris* at the police stations and reporting every movement to the police or the *patel* were a real harassment. The imposition of *hazari* system, instead of curbing the criminal activity encouraged bribery among the persons who held *hazari* registers. If a member of the community promised a share in the booty, he was marked present in the *hazari* register for all the days when he was active committing crimes elsewhere. Moreover, these restrictions made the members of the denotified communities even more hostile towards the government and the rest of the people.

On the one hand these severe restrictions have embittered them. On the other such restricted life which they lived for nearly eighty years, and a few facilities provided them by the settlement authorities have resulted in their complete loss of personal initiative. Con-

sequently, they depend on the government for everything. While the Act was in force it was incumbent upon the settlement authorities to provide employment, education, medical care and good sanitation to the settlers. The Act has now been repealed. The barbed wire fences around the settlements have been demolished. But with freedom comes responsibility. When the restrictions were removed, the facilities were discontinued, but instead of making use of this long desired freedom for their improvement, they expect that if a foreign government could provide them with employment and good life, the national government must also look after them in the same way, if they do not wish them to revert to their life of crime. The years of restrictions and control have rendered them incapable of assuming any responsibility for the livelihood of families. Moreover, being accustomed to spoon-feeding all these years, they are unaware of the conditions existing in the country, and of the problems of unemployment and inflation that are being faced by the law-abiding citizens of the country. Even those few among them who have understood these problems are incapable of facing them. And thus they easily go back to crime.

Under these circumstances whatever attempts that can be made for the welfare of these communities must not take the form of spoon-feeding. They must be helped no doubt. But the help must also coincide with initiative on the part of the person who is helped. They should no more feel that it is their right to get all necessary facilities throughout their life. Secondly, they should be made aware that just as government is not obliging them by giving help, so also they are not obliging the government or the people by abstaining from criminal activities. It is in the interest of everyone concerned that they should live honestly and make use of opportunities offered to them for their progress. The stigma attached to their name is a severe handicap for those who would try to live honestly. It is essential, therefore, for those concerned with their welfare to save them from this handicap. This needs a sympathetic and human approach which would instil in them self-confidence; and their faith in humanity which is shaken to the roots will be restored. It is the responsibility of those who

work among them to offer them co-operation without suspicion, hatred or pity. It is for them to show that if they live honestly, they will be treated like any other individual in the society. The selection of the workers, therefore, is of utmost importance.

It is now accepted by criminologists and others concerned that crime is not hereditary, in the sense that it is not transmitted from father to son. If these communities have lived a life of crime for generations it is for want of any other honest means of livelihood. It has also been seen that with steady employment many families have been settled peacefully. Securing steady and sufficiently remunerative employment is, therefore, the first and the most important requirement of these communities. Although with a stroke of pen the name criminal tribes has been changed to denotified communities, it has not brought about any change in the attitude of the people, especially the employers. The latter are still suspicious of them and refuse them employment. This has forced many willing to live honestly to revert to a life of crime. It is necessary, therefore, that those concerned with their rehabilitation should intervene in such cases and provide them with steady employment. If a few families in each district are given such help and their progress is carefully watched, it will have a better effect on the rest of their population than any amount of oral propaganda.

Next in importance is education. This includes both academic and technical education. Importance of education in reforming a community has been sufficiently understood in the country. It needs no repetition. Imparting of technical education to these people will make it easier to secure jobs. These people are not retarded either physically or mentally. They have some fine, rare qualities of physique and mind, such as strength, courage, resistance, an unusual mixture of cunning and honesty. Some of them are very resourceful. But all these qualities have been misdirected. Under proper guidance and technical education they can be very useful to the country. Imparting of moral instruction in a subtle way through the organization of recreational activities and through

entertainment programmes is also an aspect of education which cannot be ignored in their case.

When considering the topic of education the question of children's education is more important. When the parents are engaged in anti-social activities and lack moral principles, they exert a very bad influence on their children. Even if primary education is made compulsory and children are given good education at the school, its effects are completely wiped out in the bad surroundings at home. In such cases, therefore, segregation of children from their parents seems desirable. It will help to reclaim at least the future generations.

These communities are characterised by strong social organizations at the head which direct and control their life. They command complete obedience from members. As a matter of fact, if these organizations were less effective the reformation of the communities would have been easier. It is, therefore, necessary to try to win over the members of these organizations. It is indeed a very difficult and dangerous task.

In the beginning, the classification of the denotified communities into nomadic, semi-nomadic and settled communities has been referred to. The above mentioned efforts are necessary in the case of all of them but the first two groups need an additional effort to settle them in one place. It has been found that these communities often give up their criminal life if they are settled in one place, and employment is provided. Besides, such communities have to be provided with good houses to induce them to settle. Some of them lack sense of cleanliness to an even greater extent than other denotified communities.

No reformation of the denotified communities is complete until the society accepts them in their fold without distinction. People have always kept them away; they in turn are hostile to the rest of the community. Some attempts made to settle a few families of both the groups together have failed miserably. It is a sort of vicious circle, which has to be cut short somewhere, namely, the people have no confidence in these communities as the stigma attached to them cannot be easily forgotten until a



few generations of them live as lawful citizens. The communities, on the other hand, have little incentive to prove that they are law abiding unless people show faith in their goodness.

There are among these communities persons who can be called incorrigible. They have made use of the opportunities and are well settled in life, but they refuse to give up their criminal activities. Such members have to be firmly handled when they are caught as law-breakers. Any leniency towards them will have an unwholesome effect on the rest of the communities.

The failure of the Criminal Tribes Act to reform them has shown that use of coercive measures can only check their criminal activities temporarily. They cannot reform the communities. Hence to settle them peacefully it is necessary to remove the root cause of their ailment, the occupational displacement.

State Governments with the assistance from the centre have been making concentrated efforts to rehabilitate these communities. Various programmes for their economic and educational development are being implemented all over the country. The Government of Bombay which has pioneered in this field of work has consistently given attention to the problems of these communities.

After repeal of the Criminal Tribes Act in the State in 1949, the then Government of Bombay appointed a committee to study the conditions of these communities and recommend measures for their rehabilitation. The committee made a detailed study of the problem and recommended steps which would bring about improvement in the life of the denotified communities. The Government formulated programmes on the basis of these recommendations. The programme is implemented through the District Social Welfare Officers of the Social Welfare Department of the Government. In the sphere of employment, the members of these communities who possess land are given better seeds and manure, bullocks and other agricultural implements at a lower cost and with a facility to make payments in instalments. Scholarships are given to boys studying in agricultural colleges. Boys are also encouraged to take training in poultry farming by offering scholarships for the same. Loans are given, usually without interest, to start co-

operative poultry farms. Members who take technical education in smithy, carpentry, tailoring, etc. are given loans to buy the necessary implements if they wish to pursue them. It may be said that apart from helping them to pursue independent vocations, State Governments can help them to secure jobs, especially in their own enterprises, or those of the Central Government. In independent vocations one has to wait for opportunities and the person must have sufficient patience to wait. It is difficult to say whether members of these communities accustomed to immediate rewards possess enough patience.

In the sphere of education the Government has started residential schools for the boys of these and other backward communities and hostels for students. Scholarships and freeships are offered to their children. Clothes are distributed to school going children and recreational centres have been opened. They have started a few technical education centres teaching tailoring, carpentry, smithy, spinning, weaving, etc. As an experiment, enterprising boys may be sent to other industries to work as apprentices and later to be absorbed as workers. When all the boys learn the same crafts, they find it difficult to get sufficient work for all. Government gives financial help for co-operative housing. A number of families have taken advantage of this help.

In offering help to these communities, care has to be exercised to ensure that the most deserving receive assistance and that as many families as possible are covered. The poorer members of these communities often complain that the advantages of programmes of assistance go to a few leaders of the locality and their friends and relations. Those responsible for programmes need, therefore, exercise greater caution.

It is too early to evaluate the results of programmes. At present, we can only hope that the efforts bear fruit and the sufferings of these communities are alleviated in the years to come.



## CHAPTER

# 19

*Backward*

*Classes Welfare*

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It is necessary to consider what exactly backward classes are in the present conditions of India before we consider the well-being of these backward classes. The word 'backward' is not liked by many and is nauseating to some. But even in international discussions, the word is used for underdeveloped countries which are seeking monetary help from other advanced countries naming them as 'backward' but consider it a relative term by comparing one with the other who is more advanced. It will make the approach to the problem easier and more practical.

In the Constituent Assembly, while discussing the safeguards for backward classes, the Constitution makers of India had suggested at two or three places equivalent terms but they have not been able to define the backward classes precisely and accurately. For instance, under the Directive Principles of State Policy, article 46, it has been mentioned:

The State shall promote with special care the educational and *economic interests* of the *weaker sections* of the people, and in particular, of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes, and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation.

Therefore, under article 340, the Constitution lays down the provision for the appointment of a commission to investigate the conditions of socially and educationally backward classes within the territory of India and the difficulties under which they labour and to make recommendations as to the steps to remove such difficulties and to improve their condition subject to which such grants should be made and the order appointing such Commission shall define the procedure to be followed by the Commission.

Further, under article 338, there is a provision made for the appointment of a special officer for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. It has been defined in that article that the references to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes shall be construed as including references to such other backward classes as the President may, on receipt of the report of a Commission, by order specify and also to the Anglo-Indian community.

It is true that as the country has decided to follow a socialistic pattern of society and declared as its goal a classless and casteless society, we cannot continue for ever classifying people on the basis of caste. It has also been mentioned in one of the writer's annual reports that the backwardness has a tendency to perpetuate itself and those who are listed as backward, try to remain as such and thus backwardness becomes a vested interest. In view of the goal which the country has set before itself, some people would like to apply the term of the backward class to the class of people, whose social standard should be raised or call them underprivileged section of the people. All the same, let us abide by the provisions of the Constitution and understand the backward class as a generic name, including the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and *socially and educationally* backward sections of the people as provided under article 340.

We will have to take into consideration the question of caste and tribe, as according to the Constitution, the President has issued an order publishing schedules for castes and tribes in different States for granting concessions to them. The order is amended from time to time in accordance with the desire and the decision of both Houses of Parliament.

The Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes can be distinguished from others in a rough and ready manner as follows:

The Scheduled Castes are those which are considered untouchables generally and are considered as such in society numbering about 818 with a population of nearly 5.53 crores. They also may include some of the Ex-Criminal Tribes numbering about 40 lakhs in the whole of the country, most of them being in the State of Uttar Pradesh. They are to be given special treatment

even though untouchability is abolished under article 17 of the Constitution and has been made a cognisable offence punishable in accordance with law.

Scheduled Tribes likewise consist of 304 tribes with a population of 2,25,11,854 according to the latest amended list of the President's Order.

The term backward class has not been defined by the Central Government. For want of a workable criterion, it has been left to the State Governments to have their own list of backward classes as they think fit according to their political exigencies of administrative convenience and the resources from which they can give financial help to them.

The Backward Classes Commission was a statutory body appointed in 1952 under article 340 of the Constitution and the report was published in 1955 with a very good data about the conditions of the backward classes but failing to give a precise list of such backward classes all over the country. It did make suggestions by describing them but not defining the backward classes as follows:

After consideration of social conditions in Indian society and the causes for the backwardness of a large section of the people, we adopt the following criteria for general guidance: (1) low social position in the traditional caste hierarchy of Hindu society; (2) lack of general educational advancement among the major section of a caste or community; (3) inadequate or no representation in Government service; and (4) inadequate representation in the field of trade, commerce and industry.

They also have given the following description of communities and castes which have been classified as backward: (1) those who suffer from the stigma of untouchability or near untouchability; (2) those tribes who are not yet sufficiently assimilated in the general social order and (3) those who owing to long neglect have been driven as a community to crime. This group is now resolved into those belonging to Scheduled Castes, those belonging to Scheduled Tribes—the remainder will be considered as belonging to other Backward Classes, (4) those nomads who do not enjoy

any social respect and who have no appreciation of a fixed habitation and are given to mimicry, begging, jugglery, dancing etc.; (5) communities consisting largely of tenants without occupying rights and those with insecure land tenure; (6) communities consisting largely of agricultural or landless labourers; (7) communities consisting of a large percentage of small land-owners with un-economic holdings; (8) communities engaged in cattle breeding, sheep breeding or fishing on a small scale; (9) artisan and occupational classes without security of employment and whose traditional occupations have ceased to be remunerative; (10) communities, the majority of whose people do not have sufficient education and, therefore, have not secured adequate representation in Government service; (11) social groups from among the Muslims, Christians and Sikhs who are still backward socially and educationally; and (12) communities occupying low position in social hierarchy.

The number of other backward castes which can be included in the list of other Backward Classes which is now 1,426 is approximately estimated to go upto 2,399 out of which 913 alone can account for a population of 11.50 crores. If we add the population of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes which is seven crores and women who can be regarded as backward according to the Backward Classes Commission, to be included in the backward classes list, the bulk of the country's millions will be counted as coming within the category of 'backward' and no useful purpose would be obviously served by the inquiry as conducted by the Special Commission in this matter. This figure will remind us of the general backwardness, social, economic and educational, of our country as a whole and also of the fact that the difficulties and handicaps from which the backward people suffer, differ only in intensity and not in kind from those of the people in general.

It is now decided that in the Third Five-Year Plan, in addition to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, a provision will be made under the head, others, (meaning other Backward Classes) which includes De-notified (Ex-Criminal Tribes, Nomads and Semi-nomadic Tribes), Christian converts and Neo-Buddhists according to the criterion accepted by the different States.

The Census Commissioner has been now asked by the Government of India not to have population on caste basis except for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes so that the new census of 1961 will not show the number of the communities to be listed as Other Backward Class and the very basis for giving special concessions to them will disappear altogether. One may think that the names of communities which are considered de-notified or nomadic tribes, will have to be mentioned in the columns in the census report, otherwise it will be difficult to work out the population of these two important communities of the Other Backward Class for which a provision is to be made in the Third Five-Year Plan particularly by the States.

It is true that if we wish to approach nearer to the goal of the casteless and classless society, we will have to do away with the names of the castes, at least so far as the educational institutions are concerned. It will also prevent the people belonging to other communities to get scholarships and freeships except on the basis of income or merit. A scheme for post-matric scholarships of the Government of India which has prescribed merit-cum-income as an additional qualification for giving scholarships will still have to maintain a list of other backward classes for which the Census Commissioner will have to provide the population figures unless a revised policy is to be adopted by the Ministry of Education to do away altogether with caste basis so far as the other backward classes are concerned.

Different State Governments have different lists of other Backward Classes and this has created a difficulty in considering Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and other Backward Classes on a uniform basis all over the country. So far as Government of India services are concerned, it accepts the community as Scheduled Caste or Scheduled Tribe according to the schedule of the President's Order irrespective of States and Union Territories where the Castes and Tribes reside.

Considerable amounts were set apart in the first two five-year plans for the welfare of the Backward Classes. The amounts were in addition to the committed expenditure or the general expendi-



ture that is incurred by the States every year under the different departments. The following statement shows the break up of the allotments for both the plan periods and for the Third Five-Year Plan (proposed) for the Centrally sponsored and State Sector schemes for different categories:

### FIRST FIVE-YEAR PLAN

Scheduled Castes	Rs. 14.00 Crores
Scheduled Tribes	Rs. 22.00 Crores
Others	Rs. 3.00 Crores
Total:	Rs. 39.00 Crores

### SECOND FIVE-YEAR PLAN

#### Central Sector

Scheduled Castes	Rs. 5.41 Crores
Scheduled Tribes	Rs. 18.68 Crores
Others	Rs. 1.10 Crores
Total:	Rs. 25.19 Crores

#### State Sector

Scheduled Castes	Rs. 20.22 Crores
Scheduled Tribes	Rs. 29.66 Crores
Others	Rs. 8.58 Crores
Miscellaneous	Rs. 7.00 Crores
Total:	Rs. 65.46 Crores
Grand Total:	Rs. 90.65 Crores

### THIRD FIVE-YEAR PLAN (PROPOSED)

#### Central Sector

Scheduled Castes	Rs. 10.00 Crores
Scheduled Tribes	Rs. 28.00 Crores
Others	Rs. 2.00 Crores
Total:	Rs. 40.00 Crores

#### State Sector

Scheduled Castes	Rs. 22.00 Crores
Scheduled Tribes	Rs. 31.00 Crores
Others	Rs. 7.00 Crores
Total:	Rs. 60.00 Crores
Grand Total:	Rs. 100.00 Crores

Thus the amount for the Backward Classes in the Second Five-Year Plan was nearly Rs. 90 crores, while it is Rs. 100 crores for the Third Five-Year Plan. The various welfare schemes are to be executed by the State Governments which have no separate machinery for execution of the schemes at the district level and, therefore, these schemes are implemented by the various departments and through N.E.S. Blocks where co-ordination is necessary. There is a rush of expenditure in the last two years of the plan because the comparative expenditure for the first three years is small.

From the statement it will be seen that the Scheduled Tribes got a good share both from the Central and the State Governments in regard to the welfare schemes. There is a provision under article 275 of the Constitution which provides for the grant-in-aid out of the revenues of the Consolidated Fund of India for promoting the welfare of the Scheduled Tribes in States or raising the level of administration of the Scheduled Areas as well as for the Tribal Areas and the Tribals of Assam. The object in providing big amounts and formulating the welfare schemes is to bring these backward classes in line with others in a measurable distance of time. This can be done in two ways—the expenditure on other sections except the backward classes should be so adjusted as to give a greater weightage for the welfare schemes for this backward section. It has been found that nearly 19 or 20 per cent of the total outlay of the five-year plans is being allotted for the social service section. This includes also the welfare schemes sponsored by the Central Social Welfare Board for the welfare of women and children. It is very difficult to evaluate precisely the progress achieved during the past ten years towards the goal of bringing in line the backward classes with others.

It very often happens that most vocal sections of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes have been put in an advantageous position both in the legislatures and in public life and they attract more attention as compared to others who are most backward. This fact has been taken into consideration while drafting the Third

Five-Year Plan and the directives have been given to the State Governments to see that the lowest strata of the Scheduled Castes, for instance, the *mehtars*, *bhangis* and *doms* should receive their due share in the welfare activities. Similarly, the Scheduled Tribes who are most neglected should have priority in the matter of welfare schemes. It is yet to be seen how far the State Governments follow this directive in formulating the welfare schemes and implementing them during the Third Five-Year Plan.

The main problem of the Scheduled Castes is that of untouchability and the social disabilities arising therefrom. Non-official agencies have been doing the propaganda for the removal of untouchability as they are best suited for this kind of work. In this respect it has been found that legislation and the number of cases resulting therefrom and the official action alone have not been as effective as the propaganda by the non-official organizations and their workers. The problem of the scavengers and sweepers requires to be tackled urgently and their conditions of work made more decent from the humanitarian point of view. More emphasis has been laid on this aspect in the Third Five-Year Plan. Even now in the big cities like Bombay, Calcutta and Madras the progress in this direction has not been as satisfactory as it should have been as there are more slums created than destroyed in such big cities and towns. In smaller towns and the countryside, the conditions of this class are far from satisfactory. Subsidies are given for providing housing facilities to the conservancy staff which consists mostly of *mehtars* and scavengers in the Municipal areas and to substitute the hovels where these people live and which are found in the countryside by decent houses. Distribution of waste land or the land from *bhoodan* for the benefit of the Scheduled Castes who are mostly dependent on other sections of society is very necessary so as to make them assert their civic rights which these people are not enjoying to the full in the rural areas. Separate wells as far as possible have been discouraged, but still in a majority of villages the Scheduled Castes are not able to fetch water from the common wells even in the areas where the N.E.S. Blocks have been functioning. Intensive pro-

paganda is necessary to create healthy public opinion to have conditions for eliminating altogether such disabilities. The Government officers during the tour should make it a point to visit the localities where the sweepers and *bhangis* live. This can be made compulsory if the Government officers are told that they would not earn their travelling allowance if *bhangis*, *basties* or *charries* are not visited by them during their tours.

A good number of Scheduled Caste students studying in the colleges are taking advantage of the Government of India scheme for award of post-matric scholarships. The number of applications is going up in a geometrical progression. This really is a matter of satisfaction but, on account of various reasons, applicants are not coming forward in large numbers, to fill up the various Government posts, which are specially reserved for them. A feeling of confidence has to be created in the mind of Scheduled Caste people so that they can stand on their own legs. They should also take along with them their unfortunate brethren like the *bhangis* and *mehtars*. This is very necessary as there is a chance of losing the ground which they have so far gained for want of unity. On account of democratic decentralisation it is probable that in village *panchayats* these people will not be able to assert their rights as they are in a minority and dependent on the influential and richer sections of the society.

The main problem of the Scheduled Tribes who are not untouchables but live in inaccessible areas is chiefly their integration with the rest of the society. It is a difficult problem as they have been kept apart from the general society for centuries inhabiting the forest and the hilly areas. As a result of their habitats being far removed from the so-called civilized centres of towns and cities, they could not take any advantage of the amenities like education and health which are being enjoyed by other sections and share the general prosperity. Some of them are still attached to shifting cultivation, being unable to get any fertile land in the plains. This problem is now being tackled seriously by opening demonstration farms where anti-erosion and terracing methods are being exhibited. Centres for medical health are being opened, but

for want of sufficient number of doctors, it has not been possible to cope with the problem of diseases like yaws, leprosy, etc., which are prevalent in the tribal areas. Antimalaria measures undertaken by the W.H.O. with the assistance of the State Governments have been very successful in eradicating malaria in most of the tribal areas. But the difficulty of pure drinking water in the interior areas is still being felt.

In order to bring about all round improvement in the Scheduled Areas, multi-purpose blocks have been set up where intensive development is being undertaken by restricting the area of the N.E.S. Block to 200 square miles and population to 25,000. Forty-three blocks of this type have been carrying on the various welfare activities in the Scheduled Areas for the last five years. A Committee appointed by the Central Tribes Advisory Board has submitted its report on the working of these blocks and has made some very useful suggestions. One of them being that this scheme should be extended to cover all the Scheduled Areas with a preponderating population of Scheduled Tribes in the country. The greatest hurdle in this task is the lack of trained personnel who should be willing to go in the interior and stay there for a number of years denying all the amenities available in the towns. Co-operative societies or the graingolas are very necessary for putting a stop to the exploitation of the tribals by outsiders.

The amounts which are allotted to the Scheduled Tribes for their education are in excess of the number of applications received for the award of post-matric scholarships. This clearly indicates that tribals are not yet as much advanced as the Scheduled Castes in this sphere. Most of the scholarships given by the States and the Government of India are being taken advantage of by the Christians, as the Christian missionaries were the first in this field to spread education among these people when Government efforts were lacking altogether. Forests are vital in the life of the tribals. It is the general experience of the workers in the tribal areas that the Forest Department has not been as friendly to them as it should be on account of unbreakable ties of friendship of the forest officers with the contractors who join in unholy alliance to exploit

not only the forests but the tribals also. Bombay has done pioneering work under the guidance of the late Shri Bala Saheb Kher supported by Shri Morarji Desai, the Central Finance Minister by starting Forest labourers co-operative societies, supervised of course by the Government officers, and thus, eliminating the contractors. This will give a great fillip in the direction of economic advancement of the tribals.

The most difficult question is that of the De-notified Tribes who were once called Ex-criminal Tribes. Their number is considerable in the State of Uttar Pradesh. Before the repeal of the Ex-criminal Tribes Act by the Central Government after the advent of Independence, these tribes were kept in settlements behind iron fencing and under orders they had to attend roll-call twice a day before a police officer. It is true that criminology is not a monopoly of any community, but once a habit of criminal tendency is formed, it tends to become a second nature. Even young children copy their parents in theft by pilfering small things, which is the beginning of criminal mentality. The Uttar Pradesh Government has been trying the experiment of conducting two *Ashram* schools for the young children of this tribe who are separated from their parents. It is hoped that the experiment may succeed in removing any trace of criminology from a very young age. It is necessary that advice from an expert in psychology and criminology should guide the State Government in formulating welfare schemes for these people who have lost trust in the community at large.

The problem of nomadic tribes and semi-nomadic tribes is not so difficult. A Committee appointed by the Central Tribes Advisory Board has already submitted its report, and schemes for the welfare of these people will be formulated in the Third Five-Year Plan for settling them on land or engaging them in some gainful occupations.

The Tata Institute of Social Sciences should be congratulated on imparting training to the officers and social workers for undertaking the arduous work in the tribal areas. The Government of India has been giving annually direct grants to this Institute. Unfortunately, a sufficient number of candidates with a missionary

zeal are not forthcoming in the present climate of the country where there is a race for power or pelf. Integration and acculturation of the tribals with the rest of the country can only come about by identifying ourselves with them. This necessarily needs self-denial, hard and potent work. Without some sort of emotional integration the results of the welfare schemes will be disappointing as we find today in some areas of Assam. Let us hope that with proper training and a spirit of missionary zeal which are discernible in the special cadre of service organised in the North-East Frontier Agency, the Scheduled Tribes who have to make invaluable contribution to the building of the nation will come forward and become part and parcel of the country without any kind of imposition from the outside and preserving intact, as far as possible, their innate good qualities together with their old customs, beliefs and ways of life.

## CHAPTER

# 20

### *Nomadic Tribes of India and their Welfare*

A. A. D. LUIZ

INDIA presents an interesting collection of people who lead a nomadic way of life. In a variety of distinct communities this country surpasses the others, but not in aggregate population. They are drawn from the scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, ex-criminal tribes (denotified tribes), other backward communities, and a few who have distinct culture, but have escaped earlier ethonographic surveys, and the attention of administrators. The people of India who lead a nomadic way of life broadly come under three classifications based on characteristics and ways of life peculiar to them.

Nomads as accepted by the nations of the world are those who have no permanent homes, own herds of animals on which they live and with which they wander freely in search of pasture and water. Their nomadism is directly connected with the needs of their herds which constitute their wealth. It is also characterised by its necessity for prevention which in turn gives them a sense of security and a stable form of economy. Changpas and Bakkarwals of the North-West Frontier districts are the typical nomads of India, who present many interesting aspects of pastoral nomadism. There are communities like the Kurumbas of the South, and the Hindu Gujjars of the North who own herds on which their economy depends, but they have homes or holdings or both to which they periodically return, whereby they are not within the strict classification, homeless and landless, and thus they are not nomads in the strict and correct connotation.

In a wider but incorrect application the word nomad refers to those who lead a wandering life and shift their habitat. An



important section of the nomadic people of this country are those characterised by the absence of herds, are homeless and landless, and strike a parallel with the Gypsies of the world. Sanskrit and the other Indian languages have specific apt names, but the most popular is the Hindustani term *Khanabadosh*, literally, house on shoulder, an Urdu word of pure Persian origin, which gives the correct connotation, homeless wanderer. Irrespective of the history of nomadism, they are conspicuous for their endurance, love for freedom, dislike for controls, lack of faith in planned economy, and limitations imposed by modern society. Content with the charm of itinerant life which they alone can appreciate they move through all latitudes of the country, actually in quest of subsistence which they justify as a form of life in conformity with their early customs, or accomplishment of specific missions, or divine directives or curses. The traditional philosophies and dicta give them the stimulus to withstand the innumerable hardships and to compensate for the charms of a settled existence known but wilfully ignored. The pleasures of this mode of life give them courage and consolation to counteract their conspicuous illiteracy, social and economic backwardness, and create a peculiar form of happiness which they alone can cherish. Settled life and vocations are distasteful, for these deprive them of the freedom they cherish, involve manual labour which they dislike. These hordes subsist as snake-charmers, monkey and bear displayers, fortune tellers, magicians, acrobats, dancers, bards, oracles, ventriloquists, minstrels, veterinarians, diviners, criminals, prostitutes, musicians, quack-surgeons, dentists and physicians. A section of these tribes, the Mala Pandarams, Allars, Killekyatas and Birhors are primitive food-gatherers, hunters and fishermen. The others like Gadiar Lohars, Agarias and Ghisadiers are itinerant artisans, anxious to subsist on the traditional knowledge of art and by their ability to work with metal, wood and stone; and a few are traders, especially in grain and salt, like some sections of Banjaras of the North, and Koravans of the South. The Khanabadoshes who happen to be the most numerous have various justifications for their itinerant way of life. The Koravans, their brothers and cousins seen all over the country,

claim that they were settled agriculturists prior to the battle of Kurukshetra, and thereafter they were forced to wander. Similarly, the Gadiar Lohars of Rajasthan state that their itinerant life started with the defeat of their ruler Maharana Pratap Singhji. The Jogis attribute their wandering life to the philosophy that they foster; Helavs, Durgimuragies and others trace their itinerant life to a divine command; Bhopas, sections of Joshies and others proudly assert that they please their gods by wandering as singers, dancers, and by impersonating gods and heroes. Every section of them has a customary or sanctimonious justification for the life they lead, and that is oft repeated to conceal as much as possible the fact that their itinerancy is for subsistence and search for a better economy. The greater majority are reputed criminals of the cadre of Bhantus (Kharwal Nuts), promiscuous like the Nuts and Chandravedis, and consider these vocations as ratified by early custom or as divine command. They resort to begging generally when their talents and efforts have failed to bring in income. They are distinct from the beggars who subsist exclusively on alms, migrating specifically for that purpose, and consist of the able and crippled recruits from various castes.

Characterised by ownership of homes or land or herds, there are the semi-nomadic tribes who wander periodically or during certain seasons of the year, but invariably return to their homes or land. Their families are generally stationary. They have developed a love for home and settled community life even if it be exclusively that of their own kindred. Their vocations are generally similar to those of the Khanabadoshes, but they return to such stationary establishments to live on their earnings from trade, agriculture, performances and begging. Some are agriculturists; some have other settled vocations. They indulge in restricted and irregular nomadism which is different from that practised by the pastoral Nomads and Khanabadoshes. This classification includes the shifting cultivators who generally have homes but move in search of arable land. If it is available the entire family camps there from the time of clearing the forest till the harvest is collected.

The Perumal Mattukarans of Madras, Garos of Assam, Kurichchians of Kerala and the Gaurias of Madhya Pradesh are some of the typical semi-nomadic tribes.

Nomadism in India strikes similarities with that seen in other countries and has no known origin. There is historical evidence that it has been a feature of all ages, and that settled tribes were obliged to take to a nomadic way of life as a result of Mughal invasions, aggression, discrimination, famine, drought, and love for trade. There is evidence that nomadic hordes have gradually adopted a settled life retaining some of their early distinguishing characteristics. Nomadism is being liquidated by various forces in a slow manner, but that by itself is not satisfactory. Nomads are themselves working out their destiny like the other people of the country. They are alive to their problems and the sad aspects of life; they present the convincing proof that they are unable to solve them in their own good way under democratic conditions, and need the help of modern society.

Fortunately, the nomadic hordes of India are not subjected to any form of contempt directly based on their way of life; they cannot be described as anti-social nor are they antagonistic to national progress. They have thrived on the early encouragement given them and even now they depend on the patronage they can have. What they miss in life is considerable, though the more fortunate may not realize this. The majority are not voters, and those included in the voting lists generally miss exercising their political rights as a result of their way of life. They live in ignorance of the principles of equality and justice guaranteed to the people of India, and are unable to avail themselves of the ameliorative measures embodied in the Constitution of the country for the weaker sections. Infant mortality is high among the Khanabado-shes. This combined with the absence of a definite income threaten them with extinction. Often they are the victims of the pangs of hunger which prompt them to crime. Some sections continue to be mistrusted and even harassed for atrocities committed by their ancestors. There are complaints all over the country that they are maltreated, harassed and disturbed by the administrators of law.

Their depleted economy and illiteracy are seldom sympathetically considered. The more fortunate never permit their absorption into the society and plead their customs, knowledge of poison, witchcraft, tendency to pilfer, and highly specialized way of life as excuses to keep them away. These excuses affect them badly and their problems defy any solution.

The Union and the State Governments and welfare institutions are now alive to the need for the welfare of the nomadic tribes. The fact that they were denied attention before and after independence entitles them to priority. Welfare measures have been implemented in some Governments and private agencies, but they have not been totally successful. At times public and private resources and energy have been wasted. Attempts have been made to settle them in agricultural colonies. Bare gift of a home or a patch of land or both does not solve their problems. Their important problems, the battle for subsistence, search for employment, the need for better economy and the desire to be absorbed in the general society have yet to receive any attention. A correct procedure would be to classify a tribe after observing their life, habits, economy, and psychology, as pastoral Nomads, Khanabadoshes or semi-nomadic tribes, and to implement welfare schemes suitable to them.

The pastoral nomads present a better form of economy than many sections of settled people in this country. They are relatively more secure than the hunters, fishermen, food-gatherers, the wandering Khanabadoshes, and semi-nomadic tribes. Their nomadic way of life is absolutely necessary for preservation and safety of their herds and themselves. Those of the Himalayan tracts move to lower elevations to escape the rigors of winter, and return to higher elevations to avoid the heat of summer. A settled life is harmful to them and it should not be advocated. The most disappointing feature of their society is the high percentage of illiteracy to which no attention has been paid. Owing to hazards on the tracts and lack of medical aid, many lose their life. Wild animals attack their herds and destroy them and there is no veterinary aid to arrest the loss by diseases. Surprisingly, infant mortality

is not high though antenatal and postnatal care is unknown. Illiteracy can only be liquidated by education in residential institutions at locations where climate is favourable. Nomads generally prefer instruction to be imparted by those of their religion and favour separate institutions for both the sexes. The general recommendation of residential schools would not be suitable for the Changpas who tend their flocks in the Himalayan desert tracts on the roof of the world. They will not agree to part with their children to be stationed at places free of the rigor of climate, for such safe locations are extremely few in the long tracts they have to traverse as graziers and carriers. Mobile schools would be more suitable for their betterment. Loss of human life can be reduced by improving their normal routes, and providing wayside shelters and medical relief centres. Loss of human and animal lives caused by wild life can be reduced by arming the headman of each team or the forest guards of those areas with weapons. Development of suitable areas as good pastures after taking into account the number of animals to be grazed would restrict itinerancy which would be advantageous. Pastures used by sheep, goats and yak should be closed for use by buffaloes and cows. Their economy is satisfactory, but it could be improved by well organized and resourceful co-operative societies that could handle the collection and marketing of milk, milk-products, wool, hides, skin, meat and animals. These societies should encourage them to take interest in various cottage industries, and market the embroidered articles now produced by their women. The price which the shepherd now receives is remarkably below the current market rates, and his right for better prices should be protected. Their economy can also be improved if such of them who are not constantly required to do domestic work or to tend their flock are encouraged to raise cash crops. The pastoral nomad is an asset to the country; he provides meat for consumption and contributes to the State coffers by payment of grazing fees. At present, the charges are rather high and they are levied without inter-State co-ordination. The levy should be moderate, preferably at one point, and they should not be open to harassment by officials

who conduct the levy. Adult education can only be imparted through mobile units, for neither is it possible for them to abandon their herds nor is it advisable. The adult pastoral nomad is wedded to his vocation and way of life; change is difficult, and reform can best be had by educating the youth.

Khanabadoshes are a distinct class with peculiar characteristics. The artisan itinerants, Gadiar Lohars, Ghisadies, Agarias, Shiligars, and others who are artisan nomadic tribes have a psychology peculiar to them and their problems are distinct from those of the non-artisan Khanabadoshes like Kalandars, Saperas, Madaris, Nuts and numerous others who are displayers, veterinarians, quack-doctors, habitual prostitutes, etc. The artisan Khanabadoshes do not move for pleasure or at a divine command or curse like others, but primarily and exclusively in search of work which would provide them with resources for an independent, honest livelihood. Their betterment should be in a manner suited to them. It would be exceptionally rare to find an efficient blacksmith, carpenter, stone worker and his assistants or the members of his family prepared to abandon their traditional vocations which bring in an income varying from Rs. 2/- to 5/- a day and to settle on a small plot of land given to him by the Government or welfare organizations. Seldom would there be such a transformation, for the income from their craft is far in excess of the uncertain income from a plot of land, and far more appreciated than the comforts of a modern masonry house. Artisan nomads have wandered away from land and home. They have abandoned the homes gifted to them because these by themselves cannot arrest the pangs of hunger. Such cases can recur. 'Sedentarisation' is conducive to betterment, but should be synchronised with facilities to earn a livelihood without competition, especially among themselves. The artisan itinerants are assets to the society, and there is convincing evidence that thousands of farmers await their visit to replenish their stock of agricultural implements. The agriculturists have great confidence in their art and often describe it as talent imparted by Viswakarma, the architect of the Universe. Artisans should be settled in such a manner that they can continue to render

service to the society and earn an honest income, while professional rivalry among themselves can be reduced by distributing their settlements. It would be useless to colonise these in batches of fifty or more families. When the surrounding population and environments cannot provide work for them, invariably they have been obliged to abandon the amenities. It would be preferable to settle them after taking into account the number that could find work in and around their settlements. Four to six families in a settlement would be a reasonable number so that they are not confronted with unemployment and they have the benefit of social life from their own kindred. After rehabilitation children can be induced or even forced by legislation to attend schools. Education would create an enlightened future generation. Free education by itself may not be an attraction at the outset; free meals, books and, in exceptional cases, clothes may prove useful in keeping them attracted. The children of the artisan Khanabadoshes can be developed more rapidly than the others who have no knowledge of art. Settled artisans could be taught to turn out products with a better finish by giving expert advice and supplying them with modern machine tools. Moreover, *faux pas* detrimental to their vocation could be gradually eliminated. Closely allied with the artisans are the trading Khanabadoshes who have on the advent of fast vehicles and wholesale trade been dispossessed of vocation. They were in their own way serving society by transporting and making available commodities, such as grain, salt, etc. A revival of their trade may not be possible or advisable but they deserve to be helped to start trade or to subsist as pedlars. Artisans and traders express their willingness to settle provided the locations selected are within, or in proximity to villages and towns where they can have an occupation. The economic transformation can be speeded up by well organized marketing and credit facilities.

The non-artisan Khanabadoshes, namely, those who subsist by display of monkeys, bears and snakes, and live as ventriloquists, medicine-men, doctors, singers, magicians, dancers etc., and particularly those who look to prostitution and crime for subsistence present serious problems to the nation, and continue to be a

puzzle to themselves. Most of the itinerant displayers decline to enter service which is lucrative and stable. They have never walked behind a plough and consider it contemptible to farm and harmful to live in masonry houses. Similarly, after repeated warnings and punishment, the prostitute and her caretaker refuse to take to a better form of life. Large hordes of Nuts, Chandravedis and others proudly claim that there is no stigma in prostitution. Interestingly they describe that as 'singing' and prefer to subsist on that to other vocations. They do not hesitate to rob children and to seduce girls. Males contract marriages and have a progeny to please their patronisers. These are the evils which society cannot tolerate. Tradition and custom peculiar to them have justified the theory that it is better to prostitute oneself than to starve. There are itinerant tribes that dedicate girls to prostitution and train male prostitutes. "To beg I am ashamed, Sir, but to be with you I am no!" is the salutation which many a *Nutni* has for a visitor. This existing form of social practice cannot be cured by lands and homes. The strong arm of law acting in co-ordination with social work should put an end to these horrors. There are laws to punish prostitutes and those who live on her; but these laws have loopholes, and often the policemen who act in good-will cut an awkward figure in a court of law. In Rajasthan many cases have been reported of Nuts resorting to courts to regain possession of children taken in custody by the police. In concurrence with the States there should be Central Legislation to prohibit and exterminate prostitution, specially for those who revert to that abominable form of life after being salvaged and provided with suitable occupations. Punishment should be meted out to the female and the patron.

Prostitution has been widely practised by the nomadic tribes for two reasons: (1) the modern concept of law has destroyed the primitive *panchayat* that dealt with bad women mercilessly; and (2) no comprehensive code to penalise constant breakers of the moral code was created. Quack-doctoring, blood-letting, sale of spurious talisman and drugs should be prohibited. Itinerant Khanabadoshes find a charm in their way of life and have no faith in the plan and betterment schemes. They are recon-



ciled to bear the miseries when there is no patronage; they are extravagant on occasions when fortune smiles on them. Several thousands of itinerants in India have no intention to settle down. They claim proudly that they thrive well when they are left alone. Even conversion has not brought a change in many sections. Human efforts fail when they present numerous excuses to continue their favourite form of life. This is the point at which a good social worker frustrates. In a number of instances implemented welfare schemes have been wasted for want of co-operation from the Khanabadoshes. It is very doubtful whether adults can be reformed unless they are willing, but every effort should be made to save their children. Best results can be achieved by separating children from their parents at an early age and keeping them in residential institutions. Opinions differ about separation of children from the parents, but undoubtedly, the Khanabadosh children can only be reformed by separation. The influences of the parents are almost always disappointing. Children are known to have been taught that it is their right and duty to commit crimes. Besides, it is better to induce a child to pilfer than to risk an elder to be handcuffed and jailed. In such a state of society delinquency is inherited. It can be arrested by separation. Only delinquent children deserve prompt attention.

Some itinerants are conversant with making and vending mats, baskets, brushes and petty articles, and they wander about to procure raw material and to sell finished goods. Their itinerancy can be considerably arrested by regular societies for supply and marketing at specific locations. There is clear evidence all over this country that often the desired goal has been missed for lack of knowledge of the psychology and aptitudes of the people involved. A home or a parcel of land does not solve their problem; gift of bulls to itinerants who have no knowledge of agriculture creates new problems for them. All these measures do not fill their stomachs. A scientific study of every tribe, and if necessary, even of the sub-sects is essential before planning, and there would be better results if they are consulted and their opinion given a serious thought. Khanabadoshes, especially such of them who are

non-artisan, should be treated as a distinct class of highly backward people deserving immediate attention.

Nomadism as presented by the Khanabadoshes is a feature in many countries of the world, and no aspect is peculiar to India. This necessitates a wider field of study before planning their betterment. India can also benefit from the experience of other countries. Some schemes implemented in those countries with due reference to the psychology of the people involved have been effective and could be adopted in India. The British policy 'to hurry the gypsy' did oblige many who lived on the road-sides, to rent houses and to take to a settled life. The Turkaman development which started by attracting and forcing them to work and later obliging them to remain on the land that was developed, brought a miraculous change in the life and economy of several thousands of reputed nomads of Russia. The blood of Chingiz Khan is still flowing in the veins of many, as such, when gentle persuasion fails, legal arms and democratic force may have to be used. Restriction on the freedom to wander may have to be enforced to create the happiness of settled life and to ensure that national resources are not wasted.

The semi-nomadic tribes do not present difficult problems. They are open to innovations and generally agreeable to co-operate. Compulsory education and industrialization will bring a total change in their lives. The shifting cultivator presents many problems, of which the dislocation caused to the education of their children is important. This can only be remedied by harbouring their children in residential schools when the parents move away. These agriculturists are considerably hampered by their children especially when their cultivation requires constant watch against wild life and straying cattle. Here the social worker can play a role and appraise them of the sad future of illiterate children. It is highly probable that the parents would agree to leave their children in residential schools in spite of the sacrifices the procedure will involve. It is certain that free education in this circumstance will bring about the necessary transformation.



## CHAPTER

# 21

### *Correctional Work*

J. J. PANAKAL, M.A., B.Sc., Dip. S.S.A.

INDIAN prisons as we know them today, came into existence during the British period. Prior to the establishment of these institutions, ordinary offenders were punished by beheading, mutilation, branding, fines, confiscation of property, banishment, etc. Care of offenders in institutions was not popular mainly because it involved considerable direct expense.

Though the early prisons in India were based on British institutions, the Directors of the East India Company were indifferent to spending money on them. Therefore, there was overcrowding as well as inadequate food, clothing and medical attention for prisoners. Prisons were run by district magistrates who did not give sufficient attention to prison administration.

In 1835, Lord Macaulay moved the British Administration to look more carefully into the conditions in prisons. A Committee of which he was a member was appointed in 1836. After two years of work, the Committee submitted its report strongly criticising corruption, laxity of discipline and extramural employment on public roads. Reformation through moral teachings, education or any other system for rewards for good conduct was vigorously rejected. But the Committee recommended the construction of central prisons where the offenders may be engaged in dull and monotonous tasks with no hope of early release for good performance. Apparently, the Committee was overwhelmed by its reactions to the conditions in prisons. In spite of its unusual approach, the report of the Committee marks a great advance in prison reform in India. Its recommendations for new buildings and

intramural employment paved the way for further development of prison reform which would have been delayed otherwise.

Considerations such as the high death rate in prisons led the Government of India to appoint a second Committee in 1864 to look into the question of prison management. This Committee included some expert element not present in the 1836-38 Committee. Still the report of this Committee was not as forcible as that of the previous Committee.

In 1877, a third Committee, consisting mainly of officials engaged in prison work, was instituted in Calcutta. All aspects of jail administration were discussed by this Committee. The Report gave vivid information about the conditions of prisons.

The fourth Committee constituted in 1888-89 was mainly concerned with finding out ways and means to implement the principles laid down by previous Committees and to develop plans for uniformity in prison administration on an all-India basis. Two experienced prison officials, Drs. Walker and Lethbridge, were entrusted with this project. Their report examined the whole field of internal administration of the prison department.

Their work was supplemented by another Committee which met in Calcutta in 1892. It was this Committee which drew up proposals on the subject of prison offences and punishments, later incorporated in the Prisons Act of 1894.

Since 1899, the administration of prisons has progressed steadily. Constant efforts have been made to study the factors involved in crime, prison administration and crime prevention. Buildings have been constructed, better diet plans enforced, prison labour system improved, remission system introduced, and death rates reduced. Systematic work done by officers in various states led to these improvements.

Immediately after the First World War, the Government of India appointed another Committee in 1919, of which Sir Alexander G. Cardew was Chairman. The Committee's inquiries had particular reference to the efficacy of and appropriateness of prison administration and restraint on liberty. Further, they

examined the possibility of strengthening the reformatory influence of prison administration and discrimination in regard to the treatment of criminals of different classes and ages. The Committee also gave attention to the best means of assisting prisoners after release to regain their position in society. The main report of the Committee running over 500 pages is a major contribution to thinking and practice in prison administration in India.

Cognizable crime in India reported every year to the police since 1948 is given below:

1948	..	..	6,25,909
1949	..	..	6,54,019
1950	..	..	6,35,508
1951	..	..	6,49,728
1952	..	..	6,12,010
1953	..	..	6,01,964
1954	..	..	5,56,912
1955	..	..	5,35,236
1956	..	..	5,85,217
1957	..	..	5,81,371
1958	..	..	5,90,987

As an illustration of different kinds of offences reported, the following table gives a breakdown of the 1958 figure:

<i>Type of offence</i>				<i>Number</i>
Murder	..	..	..	10,661
Kidnapping and abduction	..	..	..	6,043
Dacoity	..	..	..	4,658
Robbery	..	..	..	7,120
Housebreaking	..	..	..	1,24,695
Thefts : cattle	..	..	..	23,832
: ordinary	..	..	..	2,12,271
Rioting	..	..	..	24,942
Criminal breach of trust	..	..	..	16,017
Cheating	..	..	..	9,503
Counterfeiting	..	..	..	555
Miscellaneous	..	..	..	1,50,690

Punishments that may be inflicted include death, rigorous and simple imprisonment and fine.

All prisons are regulated by the Prisons Act IX of 1894. The Prisoners Act III of 1900 consolidates the law relating to all prisoners confined by order of court. The Identification of Prisoners Act XXXIII of 1920 gives the power to take measurements or photographs. Whipping as a mode of judicial punishment has been abolished.

State Governments have from time to time appointed committees to enquire into prison administration. Some of the Committees whose reports are available are listed below:

1. The United Provinces Jail Inquiry Committee, 1928-29
2. The Committee on Prison Reforms in Mysore, 1940-41
3. The United Provinces Jail Reforms Committee, 1946
4. The Bombay Jail Reforms Committee, 1946-47
5. The Bihar Jail Reforms Committee, 1946-48
6. The East Punjab Jail Reforms Committee, 1948-49
7. The Madras Jail Reforms Committee, 1950-51
8. The Jail Reforms Committee, Orissa, 1952-55
9. The Jail Reforms Committee, Travancore-Cochin State, 1953-55
10. The Uttar Pradesh Jail Industries Enquiry Committee, 1955-56.

The reports of these Committees as well as of those of other Committees who have studied general or specific aspects of prison administration offer valuable information pertaining to the history of correctional work in India.

During 1951-52, the services of two experts, Dr. Walter Reckless and Dr. Edward Galway, were made available to the Government of India by the United Nations. Besides conducting training for prison officers, at the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, these experts prepared a report on prison administration in India. Based on the evaluation of prison administration, suggestions were made which included the following:

(1) The juvenile delinquents of India should be taken out of adult jails, adult courts and police lock-ups, and special facilities for delinquent juveniles should be provided in the form of juvenile courts, remand homes, probation, certified schools, and after-care. (2) The development of full-time probation service on a district basis in the various states of India, with appropriate central and state legislation. (3) The development of full-time after-care service for prematurely released prisoners. (4) The establishment of full-time revising boards which will be concerned with selection of prisoners for premature release. (5) New jails should perform specialised functions, such as an agricultural colony, an open Borstal, a medical and psychiatric unit, a vocational unit, etc. (6) Several of the old jails should be converted into jails with a specialised programme. (7) The jail manual should be revised. (8) The superior staff of the jail need training for correctional work. (9) Legal substitutes should be found for short sentences. (10) Ways should be found to reduce the number of undertrial prisoners and the period for which they are remanded to jail, etc.

The Government of India appointed a Committee during 1957 for the purpose of preparing an all-India Draft Jail Manual, examining the Prisons Act and other relevant Central laws suggesting any necessary central legislation, and making proposals for prison reforms to be adopted uniformly throughout the country. The majority of the members of the Committee were Inspectors General of Prisons who were actively associated with problems, policies and programmes in the field of correctional work. The Committee prepared a Draft Prison Manual as well as a Report. These were submitted to the Ministry of Home Affairs towards the close of 1959.

The Borstal Schools Acts have been put into operation in several states for offenders between 15 and 21 years of age (offenders between 16 and 21 years of age where Children Acts are in force). A Borstal school functions as a correctional institution, and inmates



are given industrial and other related training. Besides, disciplinary and moral influences are emphasised.

The Reformatory Schools Act VIII of 1897 and preceding legislations provided for the treatment of juvenile offenders in reformatory schools. Later, some states passed Children Acts which provided for a more comprehensive approach to the problem of juvenile delinquency. These Acts provide for the appointment of probation officers and the establishment of remand homes, juvenile courts and certified schools. Bombay, Madras and West Bengal have decades of experience in this field of work.

Legislations permitting the release of offenders on probation were in existence in the States of Bombay, Madras, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, etc. who have experimented with probation services for several years. In 1958, the Central Probation of Offenders Act was passed which compares favourably with probation legislation in the most progressive countries.

Extensive programmes of after-care have been developed in recent years following the recommendations of the Advisory Committee on After-care appointed by the Central Social Welfare Board, Government of India. These include short-term rehabilitation homes as well as institutions providing services on a long-term basis.

## CHAPTER

# 22

### *Beggar Problem*

S. D. GOKHALE, B.A.

AS a major democracy in Asia, India is shouldering a bold responsibility of planning social welfare on a huge scale. The success of the scheme and the projects under social welfare cannot possibly be evaluated at this juncture, but it is certain that the very foundations of democracy will be at stake if this experiment of planning leads to failure and frustration. As India is trying to achieve in a few decades what probably has been achieved by the Western Countries in several centuries, it has created a pressure on the speed of planning and its execution. The Indian society which is in transition has no choice but to meet this great challenge, and give the common man freedom and security. Owing to the fact that the State is stepping into industrial enterprises a new social pattern has been created where a very rapid polarisation of population is being witnessed. The creation of industrial townships and urban areas has brought a new meaning to life in terms of automaton, mechanisation and scientific growth, which are followed by lack of ethical attitudes, absence of creative joys and philosophical foundations of life. As other countries have witnessed, the urban texture of society has manifested urban problems. These problems can be categorised in three main groups: (1) problems related to industrial welfare; (2) problems related to breach of penal laws like delinquency and crime, and (3) problems connected with ethical deterioration of personality. Prostitution and begging are the capital examples of this deterioration.

Recognizing the need of handling the problems in the third category, a provision has been made in the Third Five-Year Plan.

In the outline the priorities recommended are: (1) prevention and treatment of juvenile delinquency; (2) moral and social hygiene programmes; (3) probation, supervision and follow-up; (4) after-care services; (5) prevention and treatment of beggary and vagrancy; (6) welfare services in prisons; and (7) work among the handicapped.

**Casual and Professional.**—For years we have been watching beggars on footpaths, at bus-stops, hotels, and temples, and numerous persons have been seen to enter the gates of the Receiving Centre at Worli. But one may ask; is it merely a blatant manifestation of an ethical vacuum? Is it a personality disorder? Is it the result of overwhelming poverty in this country, or is it an outcome of broken homes? Whatever be the reason, the beggar has lost his self-respect and dignity. The problem is typically urban. As it has become very complex with its root in the socio-economic soil, its solution is not easy. Persons who usually land in this profession are either in need of relief or rehabilitation. The first group consists of persons suffering from diseases and handicaps. They are unable to find employment. The second group consists of persons who have taken to an easy life and who desire to make money, want to depend on charity and lead the life of a social parasite. The first group usually consists of casual beggars, while the second one consists of professional ones. This vast problem cannot be solved through legislation, but it is possible to extend a helping hand to the needy, handicapped and diseased who are driven to begging; and it is desirable to process the professional beggar through the advance technique of correctional welfare.

**Causation.**—A man cannot become a beggar by a single cause alone. There is always a plurality of causes, and there is always a queer pattern of combination in this causation. It is not possible to give a categorical answer and attribute begging to a single general cause. The roots of mendicancy are well-known to sociologists, but some of the causes mentioned by Dr. M. V. Moorthy in his research study, *The Beggar Problem in Greater Bombay* may be mentioned; (1) over-population in the region

with consequent pressure on land and inability of land to support the people; (2) systems of land tenure. Tyrannical landlordism. Subdivision of holding coupled with large families and unprofitable methods of farming; (3) debts; (4) famines, floods and epidemics which weaken the community or impose hardships; (5) family breakdown; (6) emotional and economic disabilities imposed on a man or woman after desertion; (7) chronic and pernicious diseases; (8) physical and mental handicaps; (9) truancy and delinquency; (10) inability to secure a job; (11) unwillingness to work; (12) religious bias and vows binding one to the mendicant order; (13) anti-social attitudes and child lifting; (14) lack of facilities for training for employment; (15) lack of institutions providing for the welfare of the unattached, abandoned and disabled; (16) lack of social security and absence of social responsibility; (17) obvious attractions of city life, linked up with possibility of easy and ticketless railway travel; and (18) the general outlook on life which inclines one to believe in destiny.

Wherever begging has existed we may infer the operation of at least some of these causes. Beggars do not crop up suddenly from a vacuum. They are born of pre-existing social situations. If beggary is a social disease, it is the offspring of a prior and parent social malady.

**Poverty in Relation to Begging.**—There is an axiomatic belief in India that beggary is caused by poverty. Until poverty is cured, beggary must prevail and has to be tolerated. There is, however, little rational justification for this way of thinking. All the beggars are not poor and all the poor are not beggars, even as all the unemployed are not criminals and all the criminals are not unemployed.

Begging may be a misfortune, but it is an offence if misfortune is exploited. It can demand relief if it is a genuine misfortune.

**Religion and Begging.**—Begging has been treated as an abnormality for a very long time. In India a difference has to be drawn between a genuine *sadhu* who has sacrificed his basic needs like food and shelter, and a professional beggar who leads the life of a social parasite and desires to live as much as possible on

charity without giving anything in return to the community. The religious sanction is only for a genuine *sadhu* and not for a habitual beggar.

**Legislation.**—The earliest law in Modern India which dealt with the problem of vagrancy was the European Vagrancy Act of 1874. Perhaps the foreign rulers were more ashamed of European beggars than the Indian ones. After the first decade of the twentieth century many local acts were passed, prohibiting begging. It would be interesting to note the definition of begging given in the European Vagrancy Act.

“A vagrant is a person of European extraction, found asking for alms or wandering about without any employment or visible means of subsistence. A beggar means any person of European extraction found asking for alms when he has sufficient means of subsistence or asking for alms in a threatening or insolent manner or continuing to ask for alms of any persons, after he has been required to desist.” The Criminal Procedure Code contains certain sections penalising begging. Section 109-B prohibits vagrancy. A vagrant is defined as “a person who has no ostensible means of subsistence or who cannot give a satisfactory account of himself.” Section 55-(1) (b) gives the definition of a vagabond which is more or less identical. It is interesting here to mention that Indian census reports list beggary and vagrancy as occupations and means of livelihood, though the beggar is defined as a person without means of livelihood and occupation. The rules framed under the Indian Railway Act prohibit begging in a limited way.

Apart from the all-India legislation the following Acts are in existence in the States of this country: (1) Prevention of Begging Act, Bihar, 1952. (2) Bombay Beggars Act, 1945 (Remodelled as Prevention of Begging Act, 1959). (3) Prevention of Begging Act, Travancore, 1945. (4) Prevention of Begging Act, Mysore, 1945. (5) Prevention of Begging Act, Bhopal, 1947. (6) Prevention of Begging Act, Hyderabad, 1941. (7) Bengal Vagrancy Act, 1943. (8) Prevention of Begging Act, Madras, 1945. (9) Prevention of Begging Act, Cochin.

In addition to these acts, new acts are coming into existence after the reorganization of the states.

**Municipal and Police Acts.**—There are certain sections in the Municipal Acts which provide for treatment of Beggary. Section 191 of the Ajmer and Marwar Municipalities Act, 1925, Section 248 of the U.P. Municipalities Act, 1916, Section 151 of the Punjab Municipalities Act, 1911, Section 206 of C.P. and Berar Municipalities Act, 1922. The Bombay Police Act, the Calcutta Police Act of 1866, the Calcutta Suburban Police Act and the Howrah Nuisances Act of 1866 and the Madras City Police Act of 1833 also have similar provisions.

The laws and the rules framed to prevent and treat beggary follow a similar pattern of penalising beggary in public places. It has been argued that legislation like Prevention of Begging do encroach upon the individual liberty of a person. According to John Stuart Mill, "Self protection and prevention of harm to others are the only grounds justifying the state's interference with the liberty of the individual, but this philosophy symbolises the age that has gone by. Unrestricted individualism and uncontrolled profit motive, an incentive to private endeavour has ceased to appeal the modern mind." Certain interests usually grouped as social interests are always placed on a higher pedestal than individual interests. The texture of social living demands that social interest which needs to be protected shall be protected over and above the individual freedom. So far as the beggars acts are concerned, it is noticed that due recognition has been given to the so-called religious sanction to begging, and in some Acts permission could be secured for begging from the Commissioner of Police or the beggars get an immunity against the operation of the Act if they choose to dwell in or about the place of worship. Recently, legislators are taking a more realistic attitude towards this religious sanction and some of the recent Acts have omitted the clauses permitting begging in or around a place of worship. As usual the old Bombay State has taken a brilliant lead in this connection.

**Magnitude.**—It is extremely difficult to assess the exact population of the beggars either in a given city or in the country

as a whole. Probably, beggars are the most mobile population, and though the census figures are available, they are hardly reliable. The only possible way out is to follow the research projects undertaken in various cities like Bombay, Delhi, Hyderabad, Ahmedabad, Poona, Lucknow, Calcutta, Madras, etc. These pilot projects may indicate the trend of population movement but cannot claim a mathematical exactitude. Take, for example, the City of Bombay. The Census Report of 1951 estimated the number of beggars in the Bombay State as 4,059 and in the City of Bombay as 2,844. This was when the state was smaller and the city limits were narrower. Now the city and state limits have been extended and the old figures do not hold good. The figure of 2,844 for the city of Bombay is ridiculously small. In a survey undertaken by the Ministry of Education, it is stated that there are 10,000 beggars upto Mahim in the City of Bombay. But if Greater Bombay is taken into consideration, the figure may probably rise to 15,000. In this connection, it can be said that the majority of beggars in urban areas usually do not belong to that particular urban area. To quote the Report, "If we take Andhra, Madras, Kerala and Pondicherry together to represent South India and the rest of the States without Bombay to represent North India, the statement can safely be made that beggars from South India are far larger than beggars in North India."

We need not go into all the technical details of various acts nor is it desirable to make a comparative study of various acts preventing beggary but it is very essential to highlight the important aspects of the acts and the machinery created to execute them in various States.

**Madras.**—Beggings by exposing physical defects or diseases is punishable with a fine of Rs. 50/- or one month's imprisonment. This Act provides for separate homes. After being arrested the Magistrates have to obtain an age certificate and a medical report of the person arrested. The trial is of summary procedure and can be held by any sub-divisional Magistrate of Class I or II. If the beggar is able to work, he can be sent to a work home for

a maximum period of three years. He may be bound over on conditions, but for breach of conditions he is punishable with six months' imprisonment. If a certain beggar is unable to work he is to be sent to special homes for which separate rules are formulated by the State Government.

**Bengal.**—The Vagrancy Act was first applied to the city of Calcutta. Anybody begging in a public place or anybody who wanders or loiters, in a public place, in such a way as would lead the police officer to think that he does so for begging, can be arrested. For special purposes permission for begging can be granted. It is a cognisable offence and the beggar is produced before a special magistrate. There are reception homes and special homes for the training and treatment of the vagrants. There is an advisory committee formulated to advise the State government. If a beggar commits a breach of rules, the superintendents are empowered to punish him with seven days' hardwork. If he commits it again, the beggar is to be produced before a magistrate and can be sent for three months' rigorous imprisonment. The institutions try to get outside employments also. If a beggar is rehabilitated he can be released. There is also a provision of externing a beggar.

**Bihar.**—Begging is prohibited in all public places, including the places of worship. For genuine reasons a district magistrate can permit a person to collect food and money for bonafide reasons in a stipulated manner. The Act mentions three types of institutions: (1) special homes which shelter the beggars suffering from contagious diseases; (2) special homes which take care of the physically handicapped, diseased, infirm, and children below 10; (3) work homes which take care of beggars who are capable of hard work. Any police officer or officer authorised in this behalf by a district magistrate can take charge of a beggar. The case can be tried by the Magistrates Class I. If the guilt is proved they are sent to prison for up to three years. If the offence is repeated, the person can be committed for three to seven years, and later on up to 10 years, that of which a period not extending beyond one year can be converted into R.I. The absconders from Beggars' Homes can be punished with Rs. 100/- or three months' R.I.



Under the Act a special fund has been created for the prevention of begging.

**Mysore.**—Under the Act a Central Committee has been formulated to supervise the machinery created to execute the Beggars Act and to advise the State government. This committee is empowered to appoint local committees. The committee is expected to establish or certify reception centres and homes. There is a Central Fund established under the Act and grants, donations, and fines made under the Act are incorporated in this Central Fund. Apart from the fund, there is a provision that one pie out of every rupee collected in the form of revenue or tax (excluding the taxes on the lands and buildings) can be utilised towards the Central Relief Fund. A religious mendicant can be granted a licence to beg. Any police officer can arrest a beggar and send him to the Receiving Centre. If the guilt is proved, he can be given R.I. There are rules framed for laying the standards of institutional treatment. There is a provision to release a beggar on licence. An appeal against the decision of a magistrate can be filed in a Sessions Court and appeal against the decision of the Superintendent can be filed with the Chairman, local committee.

**Hyderabad.**—Under the Act, a central committee and the managing committee have been formulated. The committee can collect funds for the purpose of prevention of begging. The expenditure regarding the machinery to execute the Act is to be borne by the local authorities. There is a provision to certify private institutions. Any beggar can seek a voluntary admission in a beggars' home, but he has to stay for a minimum period of two years. This is really a speciality of the Act which allows voluntary admissions. The beggar can be bound over or detained. The period of detention can be extended. Absconders are accorded R.I.

**Miscellaneous Acts.**—Section 71 of the Madras City Police Act provides for a fine of Rs. 50/- or one month's R.I. or detention in a beggars' home. There is a provision for release on licence, breach of which leads to imprisonment. Section 114 of the Bombay Police Act provides for a fine of Rs. 50/-. The Calcutta City Police Act provides for fine and imprisonment. The C.P. and Berar

Municipalities Act provides for fine, imprisonment or detention in a poor home. Absconding may invite a fine of Rs. 100/- or six months' R.I. A beggar can be externed also. The Punjab Municipalities and the U.P. Municipalities also have made similar provisions. Section 40 of the Bombay Children Act provides for the protection of the child who is found begging. The Bombay Children Act also provides for one year's R.I. or a fine of Rs. 300/- for exploiting a child for the purpose of begging.

In Andhra Pradesh, the Madras Prevention of Begging Act is applied to the Telangana area and Hyderabad Prevention of Begging Act in Andhra Area. There are certain provisions in the Hyderabad Police Act also. The beggars are classified in the following groups: (1) individual beggar; (2) child beggar; (3) beggar family; (4) infirm and aged beggars; and (5) diseased beggars. The social welfare department has opened a new home in 1952.

Centrally ADMINISTERED areas including Andaman, Nicobar, Manipur, Delhi have a separate social welfare division and a plan is ready to apply an act similar to the Bombay Beggars Act providing for receiving centres and certified institutions.

In Uttar Pradesh there is no separate Act for the prevention of begging, but Section 248 of the Municipalities Act of 1916 (Revised in 1942) has made certain provisions for the rehabilitation of beggars. The present scheme is being improved upon. It is very difficult to assess the population of beggars in Uttar Pradesh, but in a survey made in 1955-56, the Kaval Towns (Kanpur, Agra, Varanasi, Allahabad and Lucknow) showed a population of 3,217, 1,834, 3,271, 1,795 and 2,155 respectively. The beggar rehabilitation work in Lucknow is a proved tradition of that great city. Under the Second Five-Year Plan, the State government has opened four work houses for voluntary admissions. There are five private homes also. The State government spends about six lakh rupees on the scheme.

Prevention of begging is a state subject. The Central Government has no ministry of Social Welfare, and as such this problem is covered under the Ministry of Home Affairs. On behalf of it,

50 per cent grants on recurring expenditure of care programmes are given.

In Rajasthan this question is under the Department of Home Affairs and a new bill is formulated for the treatment of beggary. The Government of Punjab appointed a sub-committee to study this subject which submitted its report recently. On the basis of that report a new bill has been prepared, and there is a plan to start two homes and one settlement. In Mysore State, the Act is applied to certain cities and the number of institutions is rather small. From the survey made in 1951, it appears that there may be 24,926 beggars in the big areas of the state, but of which 8,475 belong to Mysore State, 15,448 to Madras State and 1,003 to other states. In Assam the problem is not at all acute and no remedial measures are thought of. In Madras there are two settlements and six homes for the rehabilitation of beggars. Apart from them, the Madras Corporation runs one home and another home is run by Daya Sagan. The budgetary provision in 1959-60 was about Rs. 200,000.

Thus, it will be seen that everywhere begging has been treated as an offence. Various punishments have been prescribed for committing this offence, but very rarely a thought seems to have been given to the root cause of this social malady. Begging is an unfortunate social condition which needs to be remedied by removing the very roots of social maladjustment, manifested by these individuals and not by superficial treatment of the outward expression of the problem. It is relevant to mention that in no state are reliable data available and projects undertaken in the country are few in comparison with the vast magnitude of this social disease. Many a time the problem of begging is handled by the social welfare department, more as an ornament than as a pilot project. However, it is satisfying to note that these conditions are changing fast.

Today, we see the whole population being lifted towards a social norm as quickly as possible by the new State of Maharashtra. It is worthwhile to note the important features of the work in the State of Maharashtra.

**The New Act in Maharashtra.**—The new Act of the State of Maharashtra has the following features:

- (1) The emphasis is on prevention.
- (2) Begging for the purpose of maintaining oneself either by exposing or by exploiting or under any pretext.
- (3) Places of worship are included in public places where begging is prohibited.
- (4) The best aspects of the Acts of the other States have been embodied in the present Act. And it could not easily be considered as a yard-stick of progress.
- (5) The provision of probation is very clearly made and it is obligatory on the part of the Magistrate to consider the report of probation officers.
- (6) It is indirectly suggested that the cases can be tried by honorary magistrates also.
- (7) There is a provision of long term imprisonment for the habitual beggars, delinquent beggars and those who exploit the beggars.
- (8) Authority is decentralised in the present Act and the field of activity is very well divided at all levels of administration from chief inspector to probation officer.
- (9) The legal processes of leave of absence, release on licence, unconditional release, revocation of licence, indefinite detention and release therefrom are made easy.
- (10) Officers working under the Act are to be deemed as public servants, and the reports of probation officers are to be considered as confidential.

The major drawbacks from which the new Act suffers are the following:

- (1) There is no provision of voluntary admission like the one made in the Hyderabad Act.
- (2) There is no provision of statutory after-care and probation after release.
- (3) The Act should have been more specific about the places of worship, appointment of magistrates, holding of courts, etc.

Barring a few drawbacks in the Act, it may be said that the new Act is progressive in the field.

**Working of the Act.**—In the City of Bombay where the Act is applied, it is estimated that there are 15,000 to 20,000 beggars but the institutional accommodation made available by the State government in various government and private certified institutions is for about 5,000 persons. There is a special police squad formulated by the Government and attached to the Receiving Centre for beggars. This includes female constables, finger-print experts and the executive staff.

The squad works in liaison with the Superintendent, Receiving Centre, Worli. Every beggar arrested in Bombay is brought to the Receiving Centre. On his admission he is medically checked up and handed over to the probation officer to find out his social background. Admission to the Centre is a fascinating affair. You may come across a beggar with a big knife on his person or a huge snake around his neck. He may wear a worn out trouser and a colourless tie. He may speak fluent English, claiming to be a graduate of the University of Bombay. He may be so violent that it would be difficult to control him. He may return to us so comfortably as if he had returned home after a long time. Someone claims to be Jesus Christ or King Edward, while somebody comes with artificial arms, claiming to be Lord Vishnu.

After finding the social background of the beggar, the case is discussed in a classification committee, and the plan of treatment is placed before the Magistrate. The State government spends about Rs. 17,00,000 for their rehabilitation. They are placed in institutions where their potential skill is developed. Various crafts like tailoring, agriculture and gardening, painting, spinning and weaving, clay modelling, laundering, knitting, bamboo and cane work, carpentry, leather work, oil extracting, soap making, book binding, etc. are taught. Beggars are also sent outside for employment, and it is worth mentioning that nearly Rs. 10,000/- have been invested by them in savings deposits. Land of nearly 500 acres has been brought under cultivation by the Visapur Beggars Home. Female beggars are reconciled with their families.

Preventive workshops and after care hostels have been planned. A pool of artificial limbs and equipment for released beggars has been started by the Beggars Act Advisory Committee. For able-bodied beggars experiments of work-camps have been conducted with success. In brief, these institutions symbolise the desire of the community to help their under-privileged brethren.

The survey made in Bombay reveals that "in quite a number of cases the community denomination sits lightly on the beggars. The beggars are aware that religion is a powerful force in drawing alms. Therefore, whenever necessary, they make an appeal in the name of religion."

**Earning of Beggars.**—On an average a beggar in Bombay earns a rupee a day. Though this may be an under-estimate, it may be stated that they totally earn Rs. 10,000 a day. Thus, Bombay City is giving in cash 36 lakhs of rupees every year to beggars. This shows that there is no lack of financial resources in Bombay nor is there want of human sympathy. If the entire available amount, unknowingly expended by the community, could be pooled together, it would be possible to build an adequate number of good institutions. This needs a general awareness of the problem and a common vision of purpose. Charity needs to be organized.

It is now increasingly recognized that it is the responsibility of the State to ensure provisions of social services needed by the population, whether such services are provided under governmental or non-governmental auspices. The extent of this responsibility and the ways in which it should be discharged vary from State to State, but it is necessary to formulate a well designed and co-ordinated plan for eradication of beggary.

The following proposals for the plan may be considered:

- (1) A model act should be passed by the Central Government to serve as a standard, and it should include provisions for (a) classification centre; (b) probation with supervision; (c) separate courts; (d) special police units; (e) training and treatment homes; (f) licensing with supervision; (g) indefinite detention; (h) separate measures to deal with habitual and delinquent beggars and also exploiters; (i) prohibition of begging in and

around the places of worship; and (j) provision of voluntary detention not in homes but in shelters.

The Railway Act should be brought on par with the model act, so that migration of beggars could be controlled. There should be an arrangement for statutory exchange and restoration of beggars. The responsibility of handling their problems should be more and more shouldered by the local authorities. Since the physically handicapped population is the largest single group among beggars, there should be a separate act giving special facilities in terms of training and employment, medical aid, priority and quota in job opportunities. Similiar acts in other countries should serve as an example. The scheme of social security and old age pension should not be lost sight of.

Preventive programmes should include: (1) National assistance and pension scheme; (2) registry of disabled persons; (3) development of placement agencies for the handicapped; (4) appealing to industry to absorb a fixed minimum number of the disabled; (5) starting of, at least, one shelter workshop for every administration division and establishment of vocational training school; (6) provision for grant-in-aid in the form of raw material and tools to the trained disabled; (7) establishment of uncomplicated gadgets, prosthetic and orthopaedic aids and artificial limbs; (8) creating a foundation for the disabled; (9) starting of preventive workshops; (10) development of grant-in-aid schemes for the handicapped and the diseased.

**Care-programmes.**—The institution should be classified in three main groups: (1) Classification Centre; (2) Training and Treatment Homes; (3) Shelters for the incurably helpless. The programme of classification should be well organized. The programme in the institution should aim at training or treating the inmate in such a way that he can increase the assets of his personality. The period of stay in such an institution should not be for more than three years. Forms of open treatment like probation should be developed. The type of work in the shelters is totally different because shelters are supposed to protect the needy incurable persons without any expectation of training and rehabilitation. The pro-

gramme of shelters will include old-age homes, colonies for the deformed and controlled cases of leprosy, homes for the unemployable adult blind. The mobile work camps also form an important part of the activity as a mid-way between closed institutional treatment and open form of treatment. With the help of these work camps it may be possible to avoid absenteeism in national endeavour and it may also be possible to utilise the whole manpower in the country for the projects in the Third Five-Year Plan.

**After Care Arrangement.**—Provision of after care and follow up should be a legal obligation. Development of placement agencies and after care hostels, marriage guidance in case of female beggars and establishing settlements for the deformed and leprosy patients are some of the avenues that could be explored.

To make this scheme a success, arrests should be made according to the priorities and the selective arrest or admission might avoid pseudo-beggars and would strengthen the rehabilitation programme. As a part of policy, it should be decided not to expand the work unless adequate machinery and trained personnel are made available. It is necessary to develop a manual laying down the minimum standard of institutional programmes and personnel practice in administration.

All these desires have to blossom into a comprehensive and well-designed programme for eradication of beggary. It needs herculean efforts to face and fight it. Only a multilateral and well co-ordinated approach can help to solve the problem of the socially maladjusted.





## CHAPTER

# 23

### *Welfare of the Physically Handicapped*

C. A. AMESUR, M.S.(LOND.)

THE attitude of society towards the handicapped has passed through three main stages. The primitive stage was characterized by the denial of the right to live. For instance, in some tribes in Sumatra and in certain Polynesian islands, it was customary for some people to kill, cook and eat their blind and deformed parents. Euripides the renowned Greek playwright urged the blind persons to commit suicide, and Eratosthenes, the octogenarian Greek mathematician and astronomer avoided his approaching blindness by starving himself to death. Fortunately, India was free from this barbarous tradition.

The advent of the second or what might be termed as the "humanistic" age was heralded by the growth of religious feeling. The main feature of this age was to allow the handicapped the right to live. This is evident from what Jesus Christ says, "Thou shalt not curse the deaf, nor put a stumbling block before the blind, but shalt fear thy God; I am the Lord."

The attitude of ancient Indian society towards the handicapped is demonstrated by the following examples:

"Granting food, clothes and shelter, they (the kings) shall support those who are incapable of transacting legal business, namely, the blind, idiots, those immersed in vice, incurable diseased, those who neglect their duties and occupations and so on".<sup>1</sup>

Do you treat as father your subjects who are afflicted with

<sup>1</sup>*Laws of Baudhayana Prashna, II., Adhyaya II., Kandika III., vs. 37-39.*

blindness, dumbness, lameness, deformity, friendlessness and those who have renounced the world.”<sup>2</sup>

The modern age has not only conceded to the handicapped individual the right to live but also the right to earn a living and become a contributing member of the community. The history of the welfare of the handicapped is the story of the valiant and unending struggle to gain a rightful place in society.

**Statistics.**—A Joint Committee appointed by the Central Advisory Board of Health and the Central Advisory Board of Education 1944 reports that the number of the blind per 100,000 of population was 229 in 1881, 167 in 1891, 121 in 1901, 142 in 1911, 142 in 1921 and 172 in 1931.

TABLE 1

Census year	Total population (millions)	Total blind population	Percentage of the blind to total population
1901	294.36	354,104	0.12
1911	315.15	443,653	0.14
1921	318.94	479,637	0.15
1931	352.83	601,370	0.17

In 1951 the population of India was 361.3 millions, that of Jammu and Kashmir in 1952 was 3.67. Thus, it makes a total of 364.97 millions. The normal growth during the decade in the forties was 13.4 per cent. But the Central Statistical Organization's (C.S.O.) very tentative estimates are 23 million higher by 1961 and 46 million by 1966. These are based on the following births, deaths and growth rates.

TABLE 2

	(Per 1,000 per annum)				
	1951-56	1956-61	1961-66	1966-71	1971-76
Births	41.7	40.7	39.6	32.9	27.3
Deaths	25.9	21.6	18.2	13.9	12.6
Growth	15.8	19.1	21.4	19.0	14.7

<sup>2</sup>*Mahabharata, Sabha Parva, Ch. V.*

The following table gives the estimated population along with the world's population ratio, if applicable to India of our handicapped people in millions.

TABLE 3

Year	Total according to the second plan estimate	C.S.O. very tentative estimate	Blind	Deaf	Orthopaedically, handicapped	Aged 65-75	75 and over
1951	364.97	365	1.82	0.60	2.73	7.86	3.39
1961	411.70	435	2.29	0.77	3.44	9.33	3.82
1971	463.10	509	2.77	0.85	4.16	10.03	4.60

As the census of 1941 and 1951 did not enumerate the handicapped, the Union Education Ministry had the sample surveys done in Greater Bombay in 1956 by the All India Occupational Therapists' Association and in Greater Delhi in 1959 by the Delhi School of Social Work. If their data are applied to the whole of India, the Union's handicapped population according to the Bombay Survey is 8,832,000 (2.3 per cent) and Delhi 13,440,000 (3.5 per cent).

As Bombay figures are nearer the Japanese figures as given by the Social Bureau of their Welfare Ministry, we may mention further useful figures by the Bombay Survey. Of this 61.7 per cent fall between the age group 13-55.

TABLE 4

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF THE DISABLED	
Disability	Percentage
Optical	23.60
Auditory	13.70
Oral	5.80
Limbs	56.90
	100.00

The physically handicapped groups are many and varied. These may be broadly summarised in the following sub-groups;

the blind, the deaf, the crippled, the aged, the allergic, the cardiac, the metabolic, the encephalitic, the epileptic, the paraplegic, the malnourished, etc. The problem of the mentally afflicted is a different one and is the subject matter of Chapter 24, because of the limited space only the more important ones are dealt with here.

**The Blind.**—The first school for the blind was established in 1887 at Amritsar; it was shifted to Rajpur in 1890. This was a missionary enterprise. 34 schools were opened during 1887-1947 and they have risen to 90 by 1960, with a total enrolment of 3,000 students.

The ratio of the blind per one lakh of the population varies enormously in different countries, being the highest in India, namely 500, whereas in the Philippines it is 416, Malaya 250, Pakistan 200, the U.K. and the U.S.A. 175, in Austria 66, in Germany 60, Bulgaria and Italy 57 and in Belgium 43.

By the word blind we mean those individuals whose vision is of no practical value to them for the purpose of education or in the general business of living. Loss of vision ranges all the way from a slight loss to a total loss. There is no definite sharp dividing line between the blind and the sighted.

Blindness may be due to heredity, disease, or accident. It is estimated that a large group of blindness is preventable; the most important factors of prevention of blindness are opthalmia neonatorum and sequelae of small pox. The handicap of blindness is generally obvious to the sighted person in contrast to that of the deaf. Hence the interest was aroused much earlier in the case of the blind than in the case of the deaf. Philosophers and scientists gave more attention to the problems of blindness than to those of deafness. Because of blindness the individual thinks he is more sensitive to sounds, tastes, smells, or touch sensations, or is endowed with a better memory. What one finds is that in certain practised tasks the blind are better than the sighted simply because they have practised them. In unpractised tasks the blind are no better than the sighted. More knowledge and more accurate knowledge as to the capacities, abilities, and personality traits of the blind will help one to understand them better and to educate them better. In

educational achievement the blind are almost always retarded as compared with the grade norms for standard tests; they frequently are up to the norms. This means that the schools for the blind maintain standards similar to the schools for the seeing. But the blind children are on the average two or three years older. The standard of education and training is believed to be not very high in many institutions for the blind.

Only a very small number of blind persons have received university education. Nevertheless, some of them have had very high academic attainments.

One of the modern trends in the education of the blind is to give them what is known as "integrated education". This means the education of the blind child in an ordinary school with some assistance in special subjects like Braille reading, mathematics, geography, science, etc., by a qualified teacher. Miss Rehmurt Fazalbhoy has for sometime past carried out such an experiment in Bombay with a considerable degree of success.

As in most walks of life, technological advances have made a significant contribution towards making the process of the education of the blind much easier. The talking book and the tape recorder have greatly helped the process. A recent British invention of a tape with eighteen tracks, each track playing for seventy minutes, is another landmark in the history of the inventions that have made the education of the blind easy and worthwhile.

The Soviet Union is believed to have invented a new machine which scans the printed page and translates the visual word into a kind of Morse code. If such a machine becomes commercially available, it may replace conventional Braille and put the blind on the same footing as the seeing child.

Education is preparation for life. The success of an educational system is judged by its human products. That the education of the blind in this country has stood this test is clear from the fact that we have a blind Member of Parliament, Shri Sadhan Chandra Gupta who is also a renowned Barrister. Shri Lal Advani has been working in the Ministry of Education for a number of years with considerable credit to himself. Those of us who have had close

dealings with the Ministry of Education have found him a valuable asset.

The incidence of blindness is believed to be very high in this country. It is also believed that a very large amount of blindness is preventible, but unfortunately, we do not appear to have devoted to this problem the attention it certainly deserves.

As India lives in 550,000 villages, so does its handicapped population, for there are only 3,500 towns. Maharashtra and West Bengal have therefore organized some mobile eye camps which are greatly appreciated by the village folk. This facility must be consolidated and subsequently intensified. It can be extended to the deaf and the crippled.

**The Deaf.**—The deaf are those in whom the sense of hearing is non-functional for the ordinary purpose of life, and have never learnt any language incidentally from parents; the hard of hearing are those in whom the sense of hearing, although defective, is functional with or without a hearing aid and have been able to pick up language casually, unconsciously from their environment.

**Causes.**—(a) congenital, that is, those who are born deaf; (b) acquired or adventitiously deaf; those who are born with normal hearing, but in whom the sense of hearing became non-functional later through illness or accident. At the J. J. Hospitals, Bombay, annual figures collected by the author were: congenitally deaf 60, adventitiously deaf 20, while of the hard of hearing 6,981 were primary and 17,460 secondary to the upper respiratory diseases.

The post-independence period has seen remarkable progress in the education of the deaf as in other important fields. This is evident from the fact that by 1947 there were only about 35 schools for the deaf in the country whereas by 1960 it has gone up to 52. These 52 schools for the deaf have a total enrolment of about three thousand.

Most of the existing schools impart education through the oral method and some of them carry the children to the primary standard. Training in some crafts forms an essential part of the curriculum of most schools for the deaf. The great majority of

these schools are run by voluntary agencies who are assisted by their State Governments, municipalities and other bodies like the Central Social Welfare Board.

As in the case of the blind, technological advances are making the education of the deaf also somewhat easier. For instance, the latest Mandy-Plant voice training apparatus has a microphone which carries the vibrations from a child's vocal cords to a cathode-ray screen where the quality, pitch and loudness of the voice are reported. This enables the deaf child to have some idea of what his own voice sounds like.

Deafness is not always as apparent as some of the other handicapping conditions. It is manifested by simple ailments like earache, infected throat and frequent colds. It is very important that the family doctor should warn the parents against the danger of these apparently simple conditions.

The great majority of the deaf retain a residual degree of hearing which can be trained in a number of ways and put to practical use provided training is commenced at a very early age, perhaps even in infancy. It is for this reason that audiology assumes vital significance in the education and rehabilitation of the deaf.

Audiology is the science of hearing; it is a new integrated concept of human communication. Including more than the medical aspect of ear disease, it embraces, every concept of art and science which can contribute to, or form a part of, propagation of sound, its transmission to the ear, its fate within the human organism, psychological process based upon the interpretation of the perceived sound, and the consequent reaction of the person to the mental concept engendered. Audiology considers everything that can be of aid or detriment to life from sounds which can or should be heard.

The author moved from the chair at the Fifth Annual General Meeting of the Association of Otolaryngologists of India in 1952 (Patna) that audiology clinics be opened at important centres in the country and sent his article on Rehabilitation of the Acoustically Handicapped to all the States and Union Governments, through



their Ministries of Health, Education and Finance. He emphasised its creation at the Mussoorie Deaf Seminar in 1955, which passed a favourable resolution on the subject (page 337).

Professor C. Satyanarayana worked out the cost of its construction which was Rs. 3 lakhs (excluding cost of land) and the annual cost of running at 4.73 lakhs. This proposal was put forward by the author and very ably seconded by Mrs. Durgabai Deshmukh at the first meeting of the National Advisory Council for the Education of the Handicapped, held at the Council Hall of the *Lok Sabha* on October 13, 1955. The Council earmarked ten lakhs for its implementation in the Second Plan period. The reconstituted Second National Advisory Council and its Standing Committee of which the author is a member, passed a resolution establishing the National Centre for the Deaf consisting of (i) Model School for the deaf to be implemented in the Second Plan; and (ii) The Audiology Centre in the Third Plan at a cost of Rs. 5 lakhs.

At the International Conference on Audiology held at St. Louis (U.S.A.) in 1957, Satyanarayana and the author presented a paper on the proposed Audiology Centre. At the Planning Commission's zonal meetings (1959) Satyanarayana espoused its cause at Madras and the author at Bombay, New Delhi and Lucknow.

Under the author's Chairmanship the Central Sub-group for the Welfare of the Handicapped and the Aged and the Infirm suggested that the Audiology Centre be established by the Education Ministry.

At the last meeting of the National Advisory Council it was suggested again that the Audiological Unit be attached to the teaching hospitals. The Union Ministry of Health (1960) has requested the author to give them a blue print for small Audiological Units to be established at the E.N.T. departments of the Medical Colleges. The request was complied with.

There are three schools for the training of the teachers of the deaf at Lucknow, Calcutta and Palayamkottai. From this the Lucknow one is upgraded to a college and the Uttar Pradesh Gov-

ernment awards a certificate to the successful candidates after examination. The one at Calcutta is yet to be upgraded.

**The Hard of Hearing.**—The hard of hearing as a group are hardly distinguishable from the normal hearing. In school they rate slightly lower on Binet and Verbal-type intelligence tests, but perhaps not on non-language tests. If they are educationally retarded, the retardation is slight.

Because the hard of hearing individual can hear and speak normally, or nearly so, the most obvious treatment is the increase of hearing by hearing aids and training in lip reading at the Audio-logical Centre.

**The Crippled.**—The crippled child in the orthopaedic sense is a child that has a defect which causes a deformity or an interference with normal functioning of the bones, muscles, or joints. His condition may be congenital, or it may be due to disease or accident. It may be aggravated by disease, by neglect, or by ignorance.

Causes of crippling are infantile paralysis, congenital deformities, traumatic deformities, bone and joint tuberculosis, osteomyelitis, spastic paralysis, etc.

Studies of the intelligence of crippled children have been consistent in reporting a wide range of intelligence with the average intelligence quotient in the eighties. There is some evidence that children crippled by poliomyelitis are, on the average, superior mentally to other crippled children.

There are at present 12 schools for the crippled with an enrolment of 1,000. In addition to elementary education they give instruction in occupational therapy and physio-therapy. Over a hundred students have Union Government Scholarships for education and to get and maintain prosthetic appliances as well.

Traumatic paraplegia needs an integrated and co-ordinated rehabilitation programme. The patient, though he has lost all hope of his future, still has two useful arms, a fertile brain and will power. The nurse can train the patient to do for himself, as modified from her conventional role, of doing for the patient. The doctor

aims at training him for the independent and productive future by working with what is left.

**Para Medical Professions.**—The Profession of Occupational Therapy was founded in India by Mrs. Kamala V. Nimbkar, an American by birth who has lived thirty years in India and devoted her energies and interests to educational, social and medical work. In 1950 her husband gifted a building inside the King Edward VII Memorial Hospital, Bombay to house the first Occupational Therapy Training School in Asia. Mrs. Nimbkar worked as its Hon. Director from 1950. In 1958 she started the second school at Nagpur. Further 61 occupational therapy centres or departments were opened in hospitals and institutions. This Occupational Therapy Training has also been available to students from the neighbouring countries, namely, Burma, Ceylon, Indonesia and Malaya.

Physiotherapy Centre was first started at the above K.E.M. Hospital in 1953 and then in the same year at the Emery Hospital at Anand in Gujarat. In 1958 a centre was started at Madras and another at Delhi. West Bengal is starting it this year.

Postgraduate education for the two professions was made possible in 1956 when the U.N. rehabilitation project in Bombay was made into the All India Institute of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation sponsored and run by the Government of India, the Government of Maharashtra, the Bombay Municipal Corporation and the Society for Rehabilitation of Crippled Children. Experts have been loaned by the United Nations and the World Veterans Federation. UNICEF has donated a considerable amount of equipment to the Prosthesis Department. In 1958 the first postgraduate certificate was instituted by the Union Ministry of Health.

**Speech Therapy.**—Speech Therapy is known as litation of the physically handicapped. Random sample surveys in India suggest that there are six million people with defective speech. The incidence is more in boys than in girls and more in the first schooling year. 5.8 per cent of the children suffer from speech defects. The percentage types of speech defects are: oral inactivity 48, stuttering 10, articulatory disorders on structural basis 10,

sound substitution 10, voice disorders on a functional basis 10, dialectal 5, voice disorder on structural basis 0.4 and the rest, e.g., aphasic, paralytic and hard of hearing 6.6.

Here in urban areas the student is called upon to learn three or more languages at the same time and therefore, if he has already a minor speech defect, he is bound to fish for words in conversation, hesitate, repeat or eat back his previous words. This is made worse in the South, where very fast articulation and agglutinative nature of Dravidian languages are in use. If there is any organic defect it may be corrected by the doctor and then rehabilitated by a speech therapist by psychological, physical, educational and other means.

Child Guidance Clinics in our big cities promote the sociability of the patients by individual exercises, group games, etc. The psychiatrist deals with the subconscious mind and the speech therapist with the conscious mind.

The author drew attention to this by publishing his article on lip reading (1950) and getting his resolutions passed at the Deaf Seminar in 1955. "This Seminar recommends that the Government of India should set up at an appropriate place a comprehensive audiology centre consisting of 47 rooms to provide for prophylaxis at work and school. Noise control group and individual audiometry, otological rooms, teaching and information rooms, hearing aid rooms, speech therapy department rooms, social division, etc.

"This Seminar further recommends that smaller audiological units should be attached to all teaching hospitals and a speech therapist should be appointed in each Civil Hospital."

Another resolution reads: "This Seminar believes that cancer of the voice-box is becoming a serious menace in many parts of the country. It deprives the victims of the capacity to talk. But this Seminar is of the opinion that given the necessary training in oesophageal speech, the capacity to talk of these patients can be fully restored in a few months' time.

"This Seminar, therefore, recommends that oesophageal speech centres should be opened in suitable places as early as possible."

These schemes were passed by the National Advisory Council

for the Education of the Handicapped in October 1955 and placed in the targets of the Central Government for the Second Plan period but have not been implemented and, therefore, the Planning Commission (1960) has placed them in the Third Plan.

It is further suggested that a start should be made at the All India Institute of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation at Bombay and All India Medical Institute, New Delhi.

**Employment.**—Explanatory note to the 1931 Census reads: "There is much concealment of infirmities and the figures must be treated with the greatest reserve. Their significance is comparative and not absolute. It must also be recorded that the Congress Party had non-co-operated in the census work and, therefore, the estimates are low; besides the orthopaedically handicapped, the largest single group was not enumerated. The Census Reports of 1941 and 1951 did not enumerate them. But the National Advisory Council for the Education of the Handicapped has requested that they be enumerated in 1961. The census authorities have not agreed to this.

TABLE 5

Figures of 1931 census are:							
TABLE AGE-WISE PERCENTAGE BREAKDOWN							
	Numbers	Percentage	Age group	Blind	Deaf-mutes	Total population affected.	
Blind	.. 601,370	54.6	15-20	5.9	17.2	8.7	
Deaf-mute	.. 230,895	21.0	20-25	6.4	16.6	9.4	
Lepers	.. 147,911	13.4	25-30	7.0	14.3	9.9	
Insane	.. 120,304	10.9	30-40	16.0	22.4	21.4	
			40-50	21.3	15.4	20.5	
			50-60	27.7	10.1	20.1	
			60-65	15.7	4.0	10.0	
				100.0	100.0	100.0	

In order that the results of the various sample surveys to be carried out in different parts of the country might be comparable, it is essential that the standard definitions should be adopted. Such surveys are not expected to give us an accurate idea of the size of the handicapped population but are expected to provide a reasonably dependable indication not only of the size of the handicapped population but also of the degree of concentration of certain handicapping conditions in particular areas and the socio-economic, educational and medical needs of the handicapped.

Under the auspices of the Bombay State Council on Blindness, a Workshop for the Blind has been set up in Bombay in 1960.

In July 1954 the Union Ministry of Education established a small employment office for the Blind at Madras which has secured employment for 130 persons.

There are four institutions which train the blind for employment with an enrolment of 300. Besides, about 300 deaf are getting the training in ordinary institutions where they are taken with great reluctance. A few sheltered workshops do exist for the blind at Mysore, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal.

The International Committee on the problems of the deaf child (i.e., organized by the World Health Organisation and UNESCO, in Geneva) had general agreement on certain points:

(1) That the aim of all special education for children suffering from impaired hearing to any degree should be rehabilitative. That is, that it should be to fit as many children as possible for attendance at ordinary schools, at some stage during their school careers, and all deaf children for living with ordinary people.

(2) That the best years in which children with impaired hearing can learn to talk are from the ages of one to five years.

(3) That a majority of children, who have hitherto been described as deaf, or partially deaf, can benefit from audiological treatment and that most of them can become, to a large, or very considerable extent, reliant on hearing with the help of vision.

(4) That in the training of teachers of the deaf, it should be ensured that all teachers of the deaf gain experience and study the development of ordinary children; that they should become

familiar with every kind of provision that is made in their countries for the educational training and treatment of children with impaired hearing (including work in audiological clinics, nursery schools for the deaf) and that all these teachers of the deaf should have training on a full time, and not on an in-service, basis.

Although institutions for the education and training of the adult handicapped have existed here for the past seventy years, no concerted effort has been made to get them open employment. It has been noticed that the handicapped are the last to be hired and first to be fired during the period of depression. Since the freedom of India, sheltered workshops for the blind and, now for the orthopaedically handicapped have been started. But this causes inferiority complex. Therefore, the modern trend is to get them fitted in open employment. It is for this reason that the Central Government started a section for the Blind in their employment office at Madras in 1954. It made small progress till the new Telephone Factory at Bangalore came to our rescue. During the first six and a half years the placement has been of the order of 130. The N.A.B. has placed 107 during the past six years.

The author's resolution at the Deaf Seminar (1955) reads: "The Deaf could be employed in all occupations except in Medicine and in Law; and certain trades be reserved to them or percentage of places be allotted to them." Here the Seminar's Chairman, the late Basrurkar, advocated agricultural model farms for the blind and the deaf to be subsidised in the beginning by the Union Agriculture Ministry.

A pilot open employment office for the disabled was inaugurated in Bombay by the Governor in March 1959. Its special Employment Officer Shri S. B. Kowli during the first sixteen months has been able to place 89 in various industries and establishments, mainly in Greater Bombay. Of these 51 are orthopaedically handicapped, 28 deaf and 10 blind. The blind number is less because the employment of the blind was further done by the National Association of the Blind for six years, specially in the Bombay Textile Mills, where they have placed 107.

The Employment Officer has been regularly following up the

cases of the candidates thus placed and reports that eighty-five are still continuing in the jobs, while two have been discharged by the employers and two who did not like the jobs have subsequently resigned. The Government of Maharashtra has produced a documentary film entitled, "Education, Employment and Rehabilitation of the Physically Handicapped." This is a move in the right direction.

This year two further pilot offices are to be opened at Kanpur and Delhi and at least six in the third plan period and if funds permit the object is to open one in each of the major States of the Union. It is further suggested that the Union Ministry of Labour and Employment should organize a short term three-month refresher course for training employment officers for the handicapped required to man the third plan special employment offices.

One of the most important reasons for the slow and unsatisfactory development in this field has been the lack of public interest and understanding of this problem. Although the situation is improving and there is a growing sympathy for this cause, the lack of public sympathy and the lack of appreciation of the importance of the problem continue to be the major retarding factors. It is, therefore, necessary that the Government of India who have been giving a lead in this field should provide every possible incentive to State Governments and other agencies. During the second plan period the Union Government has been giving assistance to the tune of 50 per cent of the estimated expenditure on schemes for the handicapped included by the State Government in their Educational Development Programmes.

This has, however, not been an adequate incentive since very little progress has been made. The International Committee on the problems of the deaf child has recommended full Government support and that dependance or charitable support is unsatisfactory. It may be emphasised that as a very special case the Government of India should bear 90 per cent of the cost of the State schemes for the welfare of the handicapped. Unless this is done one apprehends that the performance in the second plan period will be repeated in the third.



In States which do not have special welfare directorates or departments, the welfare programmes for the handicapped are carried out by the Health or Home Department.

TABLE 6

Type of Establishment	No. in 1960-61	No. expected upto March 1966	Approximate total enrolment expected by March 1966
Blind schools	.. 90	107	4,500
Adult-blind Training Centres	.. 3	4	350
Deaf schools	.. 52	65	4,000
Occupational therapy schools	.. 12	24	2,600
Sheltered Workshops for blind, and orthopaedically handicapped	.. ..		3,500
Special Employment Offices	.. 3		..

The Ministry of Education is of the view that trained Staff are required for the Vocational Training Centres, Central Braille Press, Model Schools for the Blind Children, Occupational Therapists, Employment Officers in employment organization, Centre for Adult Blind, Audiology Centre, and for model schools for orthopaedically handicapped children. Suggestions being considered by the Planning Commission are:

(a) that existing services should be developed and consolidated;  
 (b) that the Census authorities should be requested to undertake the enumeration of handicapped persons at the 1961 and subsequent censuses;

(c) that every major state in the region should undertake the establishment of at least one new school for the blind and one new school for the deaf;

(d) that under no circumstances should a school for the blind be combined with a school for the deaf. Wherever combined schools exist, they should be separated at the earliest possible moment;

(e) that at least one zonal training centre for orthopaedically handicapped be established;

(f) that at least one training centre each for blind and deaf adults should be established in each zone;

(g) that there should be at least three sheltered workshops for the blind and the orthopaedically handicapped;

(h) that at least one comprehensive audiology centre should be established for each zone. In addition smaller units may be established in most of the medical colleges.

(i) that each State Government in the zone should make suitable provision in the Third Plan for giving grants to voluntary organizations, both for maintenance and development activities.

(j) the pilot employment exchange for the handicapped started by the Union Government in Bombay, should be extended to each State of the Union.

It is to the zeal, energy and insight of the chairman of the social welfare zone, Mrs. Durgabai Deshmukh that we hope to get about 800 lakhs for the handicapped for the third plan.

**The Aged.**—This is a new approach to an old problem, necessitated by the changing sociological conditions. The problem was as old as the world itself, and was known to primitive societies as well. Solutions adopted have varied at different times. Initially it was the family group, later individual effort, savings, compulsory or voluntary, pension systems, mutual aid societies, etc., but all these provided a limited coverage and for a limited section of the population.

Their failure has led to a special study of the problem. It had to be recognized that the prosperity of the present generation was made possible by the effort of the older one. Study from the human angle, inspired by social justice was thus called for. A new social phase has thus set in, followed by formulation of provisions for social security. The basic factor in India's family life has been respect for the older members. Age confers on them a prestige and authority, hardly found elsewhere. In the changing sociological conditions, the problem of the aged and infirm is becoming acute. It is further made difficult by urbanisation and disintegra-

tion of the joint family life. The old age should be determined more by biological or physiological or both capacities than by a chronological number of years. In formulating any plan, it has to be accepted that there is more room for old people in the traditionally rural family than there is in the urban one.

Some suggestions of facilities to be provided are:

**(1) Living Aid Programme.**—This includes food, clothing and other items of daily life. Facilities for conversation, exchange of views, indoor and outdoor games, walks, gardening, poultry keeping, basket making, reading, music, cinema, radios, *kathas*, religious recitals, dances, excursions are some of the items for guidance to which many more could be added. The principle is that it should not be that years are added to life but that life is added to years.

**(2) Medical Aid:** Mobile medical units, with specialists' visits should form a regular feature of medical aid which is a specialized form of social service and is characterised by the emphasis on help in the social and emotional problems that affect a patient during his illness and its cure. A sort of home nursing, home help service, a family doctor, hospital facilities, hearing aids, spectacles, financial aid, friendly visits, personal visits, chiropody and barber's services, laundry, mobile meals, mobile libraries, film shows, recreation clubs, transport facilities for excursions, facilities for temple, mosque or church visits, facility for information and advice, emergency card for assistance, telephone numbers for the same in places where such a system operates are likely to be highly appreciated. For purposes of revival of interest in the aged, debates, conferences and committees are helpful. Radio-television broadcasts, newspaper publicity, specialized programmes on national holidays of importance, celebrations of 'Special days for the Old' will, one gathers, also be highly appreciated.

**Assistance at Death.**—All old people in hospitals should be placed on the dangerously ill list; when so placed they should have the benefit of full religious consolation. Provision for cremation or burial in the event of death in accordance with their religious faith or their expressed wishes should be provided for.

**Welfare for the Infirm.**—To release pressure on our meagre hospital accommodation, convalescence homes for the infirm should be started as pilot projects in the third plan.

On account of the almost primitive state of communications in most rural areas, even the provision of spasmodic domiciliary services, such as the supply of freshly cooked meals at reasonable prices, home helps, etc., might not be feasible in rural areas at the present stage. In view of this it seems that the best course will be to devise the means whereby the aged and the infirm continue to be looked after by their own family or relatives. But in the days of ever growing consciousness of individual responsibility and the rising prices it is absolutely essential to provide an incentive for the family or for those relatives who undertake to look after their aged and infirm. This incentive should come in the form of a small pension which should be given by the State Government or the local bodies. Perhaps the Government of India could share a part of the cost of pilot pension schemes undertaken by the State Governments or the local authorities. The pension should be given after taking into account some of the following factors: (1) whether or not the person concerned is a member of the joint family; (2) the monthly income in cash or kind of the joint family; (3) the income of the person concerned prior to his becoming unable to earn; and (4) whether or not the person concerned owns land. Since the number of persons who are likely to claim pensions of this nature must necessarily be very large and since the financial resources available for schemes of this kind will be very limited, it is suggested that schemes of this kind should be undertaken in select rural areas, particularly where the population consists predominantly of landless labourers. One of the inevitable concomitances of industrialization is the steady movement of the population from rural to urban areas. On reaching old age many of the people, who had migrated into cities and towns in search of work, would like to go back to rural areas where they can spend the evenings of their lives in an atmosphere of calm and quiet, away from the hustle and bustle of work in the indus-

trial towns. But they can do this only if some financial provision is made for them because they have quite often had to cut themselves off from the joint family and have in many cases had to either give up their rights on the land they own or are no longer familiar and capable of undertaking agricultural work. At present, those who sustain injuries during the course of their work are covered by the provisions of the Workmen's Compensation Act. It seems that an amendment to the Indian Factories Act to the effect that all the industrial workers who become incapable of work on account of advancing age or infirmity should be given a pension by their industrial establishments in accordance with their status. The number of years they have worked and similar other criteria will go a long way in making a substantial provision for the aged and the infirm both in urban and rural areas.

There were 202 lakhs of people over 60 in 1951; expectations are that there will be 227 and 277 lakhs in 1961 and 1971 respectively.

There are two homes in Andhra, one in Kerala and one in the Punjab. They are extremely poor as the following description shows:

(a) **Aram Ghar.**—The Home was established in 1910 as a private enterprise for rendering service to the disabled and helpless persons. Formerly this Home was run by the erstwhile Government of Hyderabad. The administration of the Home was handed over to the Andhra Pradesh branch of the Indian Conference of Social Work on 2nd October, 1957. The Home provides food and accommodation to 100 inmates which include men, women and children. The State Government has been granting an amount of Rs. 10,500/- annually for the last four years. The collections of one day's Betting Tax on horse races on the Nizam's Cup Day are also allotted to this institution. The Chairman of the Home is Mrs. Roda Mistry.

(b) **Home for the Disabled, Bansilalpet.**—The location of this home is in Secunderabad. The Home was founded some twenty-seven years ago to offer a home for the blind, the maimed, the lame and other disabled and destitute persons and to offer shelter

to them providing food, clothing and other necessaries. The Home also receives destitute persons sent away from hospitals as incurable or beyond treatment. There were 140 inmates at the beginning of April, 1959. The Home largely depends upon subscriptions and donations from the public. The State Government has been granting an amount of Rs. 6,000/- annually for the last three years.

(c) **Home for the Disabled.**—At Trivandrum there are today 22 aged and 19 infirms in the Home. The cost of feeding an inmate twice daily (noon and evening) is 25 naye paise only. The expenses towards morning *kanji* served to the inmates are defrayed by the Vanchi Poor Fund. Special feasts are being given to them occasionally in connection with national and religious festivals.

They are allowed to take light work according to their efficiency. Some of them are kept idle on account of old age.

There is a dispensary attached to the Home with the services of a part time Medical Officer who visits the Home daily and looks after the health of the inmates. Serious cases are removed to the various hospitals in the city in the ambulance van of the Medical Department. No age limit is prescribed for admission. The inmates are released on their request or on the request of persons who take interest in supporting them.

In the following table the probable targets for the third plan are 277 by the States. The number of homes to be started by the Union Government is not known, because they would prefer voluntary bodies to start and be subsidised by them. In addition, pilot pension schemes are to be introduced porbably by Assam, Kerala, the Punjab and the U. P. It is gratifying to note that the Kerala Government has budgeted Rs. 3 lakhs for 1960-61 to be used as pensions at Rs. 15 per month for destitutes over 75 years old. We do not like the word destitute, but as resources are limited and Kerala being a thickly populated State (as it has a greater density of population than even that of the United Kingdom), we have to put up with this classification. But Justice Mr. R. Sankaranarayana Iyer has advocated that the age for pensions be brought down to 60.

TABLE 7.  
FIRST AND SECOND PLAN PROVISIONS AND THE PROBABLE TARGETS FOR THE THIRD PLAN

Sr. No.	State	Plan provision in lakhs (probable)		Probable targets for the third plan Schools for the				Work shop	House for the aged	Remarks
		I	II	III	Blind	Deaf	Ortho-paedi-cal			
1	Centre	11.18	60.00	224.00	5	2	4	9	—	—
2	Andhra Pradesh	—	—	22.50	—	—	1	1	6	Schools for the blind and deaf controlled by the Department of Education
3	Assam	—	2.75	6.75	1	1	—	—	1	Pension for the Aged as a pilot Scheme 1.50 lakhs
4	Bihar	—	—	22.00	1	1	—	1	1	—
5	Delhi	—	—	29.50	—	2	—	1	1	—
6	Gujarat	—	4.89	35.00	2	2	1	1	1	Grants to families of the handicapped children as pilot project
7	Himachal Pradesh	—	—	15.75	1	1	—	1	2	—
8	Jammu and Kashmir	—	—	5.00	1	1	—	—	—	—
9	Kerala	—	—	16.20	—	—	1	1	3	Pensions for the destitute aged over 75 since 1960
10	Madhya Pradesh	—	6.84	25.00	1	1	1	—	2	—
11	Madras	—	—	26.00	2	2	—	1	—	—
12	Maharashtra	—	9.78	71.00	3	2	2	1	1	Grants to families for the care of the handicapped children (pilot project)
13	Mysore	—	—	2.00	—	—	—	—	—	—
14	Orissa	—	2.02	8.50	—	—	—	1	1	—
15	Punjab	12.00	11.37	45.10	2	1	—	1	1	Pilot pension scheme for the aged
16	Rajasthan	—	8.96	36.00	1	1	1	2	1	Pilot pension scheme for the aged
17	Uttar Pradesh	—	—	21.00	—	—	—	3	2	Pilot pensions for the aged
18	Union Territories	—	—	8.75	—	—	—	—	—	—
19	West Bengal	—	—	31.10	—	—	—	1	4	—

## WELFARE OF THE PHYSICALLY HANDICAPPED

The Blind Relief Association in Bombay was started in the twenties. This association has a distinguished record of service to the sightless and is at present administering the Dadar School for the Blind which is one of the oldest and one of the very few schools for blind girls. The Blind Persons Association in Calcutta was also started at about the same time. This association has done some valuable work in the field of prevention of blindness.

The Blind Relief Association in Delhi began with the humble efforts of Dr. Shrimati Anusuya Basrurkar who started giving food and clothes to a few blind persons. On being released from jail, where she had gone in connection with the "Quit India" movement, Mr. U. A. Basrurkar formally established this association on 26th February, 1944. The main task undertaken by the Blind Relief Association, Delhi, was to establish the Industrial Home and School for the Blind at Lakuan, a village about fourteen miles from Delhi. Mr. Basrurkar, who remained the Hon. Secretary of the Association from the day of its inauguration till his death in February, 1959, had envisaged a comprehensive scheme to have a large school, a sheltered workshop and a reference library in Delhi.

His unflagging zeal and his relentless efforts for promoting the well-being of the handicapped made Mr. Basrurkar dear to the heart of almost everyone who came in contact with him and everyone who was interested in this cause. Mr. Basrurkar was a member of the National Advisory Council for the Education of the Handicapped. He had ably guided the seminars on the Education of the Deaf and Employment of the Blind convened by the Ministry of Education in 1955 and 1956. Mr. Basrurkar was connected with many organizations interested in social work. His death has been an irreparable loss to the cause which he had espoused.

The first provincial conference was held in 1948. The next conference of the Indian Local Welfare Workers for the Blind was held in January, 1952 in Bombay, which gave birth to the National Association of the Blind. Its aims are: (a) co-ordination of work for the blind in India; (b) establishment of institutions for the blind in India; and (c) welfare services for the individual blind throughout India.



Its outstanding achievements include (a) the establishment of the N.N.B. Industrial Home for the Blind at Jogeshwari, Bombay where over 50 blind persons are provided with occupation and free boarding and lodging; (b) a Braille Press, a donation from the American Foundation for Overseas Blind at Bombay where books in Hindi, Gujarati and Marathi are published; (c) the Tata Agricultural and Rural Training Centre for the Blind at Phansa, near Bhilad in Gujarat. This is a pilot Centre for training in Agriculture and rural pursuit for the blind who come from the rural areas. An estate of approximately 240 acres of land has been purchased through a donation received from the Sir Dorabji Tata Trust. The R.C.S.B. London has deputed Mr. R. A. Babonau to work as Administrator of the Centre for the first two years. 50 blind persons will be resettled in their own villages on the completion of the training; (d) Blind Welfare. A journal dealing with the work for the blind and of interest to workers for the blind was started in 1959. It is published three times a year; (e) the National Society for the Prevention of Blindness. This Society has been established with the object of taking up the question of prevention of blindness throughout India. Rajkumari Amrit Kaur is its first president; (f) scholarships are granted to the needy and deserving blind students anywhere in India.

**The Deaf.**—The convention of the Teachers of the Deaf in India was established in 1934. They hold periodic meetings, the seventh being in 1958. It published a quarterly journal *The Deaf in India* with Government subsidy from 1949 to 1956.

Besides there were Deaf Associations and Deaf Provincial Societies; the former have joined into All India Federation of the Deaf and the later into All India Deaf and Dumb Society during 1957. The former runs cyclostyled pamphlets in English every month since 1960. They intend bringing out a Hindi edition as well. Neither of them appears to have undertaken any substantial work like that of the N.A.B. during their brief existence. We suggest that they join into one and report to the Social Welfare Board or the Union Ministry of Education for help.

In July 1947 a small physiotherapy clinic for the treatment of children afflicted with poliomyelitis was started in a doctor's waiting room by Mrs. Fathema Ismail, the mother of a polio victim. On October 19, 1948 the Society for the Rehabilitation of Crippled Children was formed in Bombay. Its rules were further amended in January 1952. Its main aims are (1) to organize hospital and clinics for the diagnosis, care and treatment of disabled and crippled children; (2) to create and educate public opinion on the problems of the afflicted children; (3) to collect, compile and publish statistics and maintain records relating to the causes and frequency of poliomyelitis in India. They run an excellent Children's Orthopaedic Hospital in Bombay. With the support of the public and the Government of Maharashtra the Children's Orthopaedic Hospital with eight beds was started in 1950. The number of beds were increased to 50 in 1951 with a daily attendance of nearly 200. It had treated 15,000 by 1959 and 17,000 by 1960. About two-thirds of this are from Greater Bombay and one-third from the rest of India and a few from abroad. The majority of the cases are of poliomyelitis (685) and cerebral palsy (173). It is further proposed that hundred beds be added this year.

Again with the untiring efforts of Mrs. Ismail, the Fellowship for the Physically Handicapped was started in Bombay in 1955. The Fellowship has started a sheltered workshop for the crippled. This is the only workshop of its kind in the country.

Very recently the Association for the Education of the Crippled Child and Adult has been formed with its headquarters in Bombay. This Association has just started a day-school for orthopaedically handicapped children.

A new body known as the Association for the Rehabilitation of the Disabled has been formed in 1960 with its headquarters in Madras and Mrs. Ramaswami Mudaliar as Chairman. The headquarters of this association are shortly to be transferred to Delhi where they propose to undertake the establishment of a large rehabilitation centre for the orthopaedically handicapped.

The Union Ministry of Education appointed the National Advisory Council for the Education of the Handicapped in Sep-

tember 1955 by a Government resolution. The main task of this Council is to inform the Government of India on all problems concerning the education, training and employment of the physically and mentally handicapped. The author is a member of this Council since its inception and its Standing Committee, whose task is to review the progress made in the implementation of the various schemes undertaken by the Government of India on the advice of the Council.

The Central Social Welfare Board was established on August 12, 1953. It gives financial assistance to voluntary welfare organizations covering the following welfare services for the handicapped: care, education and rehabilitation of the physically handicapped; hostel for the working blind, sheltered workshops for the blind.

The Board has aided about 325 organizations to the tune of 36.4 lakhs during the first two plans by way of grant-in-aid for the development, improvement and expansion of the programme of the existing voluntary welfare agencies and for encouraging new agencies to take up services for the welfare of various categories of physically handicapped persons. A number of our institutions for the handicapped find it very difficult to raise the matching portion (usually 50 per cent) of the total outlay. It is, therefore, suggested that the grant should be 90 per cent to such institutions.

In giving financial assistance to welfare organizations, the Board always considers very sympathetically the application of organizations working for the physically handicapped. Priority is given in aiding such services. Very few applications from such agencies have been rejected by the Board.

Recognizing the need for residential facilities for the working blind, the Board formulated a scheme intended for providing hostel facilities for those blind persons who have received adequate training and are earning a regular living wage in one or several establishments in a locality, but who cannot manage by themselves because of their handicaps. These hostels will also take other handicapped persons, e.g., orthopaedically handicapped. The grant

for this purpose includes salary of superintendent, deficit in rent, recreational activities and services of persons to guide the residents to their place of work and back.

The other scheme which the Board is contemplating to assist is setting up sheltered workshops where the blind and physically handicapped will be given training and later remunerative work, for the running of a hostel where these workers could stay.

It is proposed that in such schemes the Ministry of Education should give grants for hostel buildings and should create agencies to provide employment service to the handicapped, and the Ministry of Commerce and Industry should give necessary financial assistance for setting up sheltered workshops.

Grants have also been sanctioned by the Central Social Welfare Board under its socio-economic scheme to the existing voluntary welfare institutions for the handicapped persons (blind and orthopaedically handicapped) for setting up of handloom training-cum-production centres. Already three schemes, one each at Bombay, Delhi and Bangalore have been sanctioned. This assistance includes Rs. 15,000 for construction of workshops wherever necessary.

**Government Targets.**—In the First Five-Year Plan, the Union Ministry of Education had made a provision of Rs. 11.18 lakhs, while in the Second that of 60 lakhs. This amount has not been fully utilised. Model School for blind children, 4.00. Women's Section of training for adult blind, Dehra Dun, 5.00. Post-school scholarships for the blind, 0.32. Sheltered workshop for the blind, 1.50. Scholarships for the deaf, 0.24. Scholarships for orthopaedically handicapped children, 0.12. Total Rs. 11.18 lakhs.

**Second Plan provision in lakhs of rupees.**—Expansion of the Training Centre for the Adult Blind, 1.00. Sheltered Workshop for the Blind, 7.00. Workshop for the Manufacture of Appliances for the Blind, 3.00. Scholarships for the Adult Blind 3.00. Model School for the Blind Children, 6.00. Women's Section of Training Centre for the Adult Blind, 4.00. Setting up of a Model Audiological Centre, 1.00. Scholarships for the Deaf, 2.50. Technical Training Centre for the Adult Deaf, 8.00. Scholarships for the

Mentally Handicapped, 0.25. School for the Mentally Handicapped, 2.00. Scholarships for the Orthopaedically Handicapped, 2.00. Random Sample Survey of the Handicapped, 1.50. Employment Organization for the Handicapped 4.00. Assistance to Voluntary Organizations, 12.00. Model School for the Orthopaedically Handicapped Children, 2.75. Total 60.00.

The various States of India had made a very meagre provision in the First Five-Year Plan. The exact provision is not specifically known. However, in the Second Five-Year Plan, provision of Rs. 87.05 lakhs was for the physically and mentally handicapped children under Education which is not fully utilised.

**Handicapped Foetus.**—In these pages we have considered chiefly the steps that have either been taken or that ought to be taken to promote the welfare of those who have acquired a disability. This is the duty of every civilized society. It is equally the duty of every advanced society to protect its citizens against the many hazards which cause disabling conditions. This account will hardly be complete without at least a passing reference to these hazards and the measures that can be taken to minimise them.

The following are some of the most important causes of disabling conditions during foetal life:

- (a) external injuries caused by lack of oxygen, intake of powerful drugs or radiation from X-rays;
- (b) diseases such as German measles and syphilis; and
- (c) Rh blood factor.

The arms and legs of the embryo are formed during the first month of pregnancy. Any external injury or disease at that time could maim the unborn child. The eye lense is formed during the sixth week and a disease like German measles at this crucial juncture could cause blindness. Similarly, any insult during the first three months of pregnancy could affect the heart and hearing apparatus which are formed during this period. Since enzymes are developed late in pregnancy, a serious disturbance may interfere with those functions for which enzymes are essential. The hours of labour and birth are of vital importance to the brain

and the nervous system. An injury at this time could cause cerebral palsy or facial paralysis; the major cause of these abnormal conditions may be attributed to the improper use of forceps.

(a) **External Injuries.**—One of the major causes of external injury is the lack of oxygen. Anything which seriously reduces the flow of blood which carries oxygen to an unborn child can cause an abnormal birth or even death. The type and seriousness of abnormality in the child will depend largely on the time at which the supply of oxygen is interfered with (which is an insult) and the extent of the interference.

The intake of powerful drugs is another important factor causing abnormal conditions among unborn children. For example, an overdose of streptomycin could be dangerous to the hearing apparatus.

Radiation from x-rays is also a potent factor in causing abnormal conditions in unborn children and the pregnant mother will be well advised not to have x-rays taken without the advice of a competent medical practitioner. Expectant mothers should in no circumstances be permitted to work in x-ray laboratories.

(b) **Diseases.**—German measles is perhaps the most powerful enemy of unborn life. An attack of German measles, however slight, may have disastrous results for the unborn child. If it occurs during the first three months of pregnancy, it may maim, blind or deafen the baby.

We believe that one injection of gamma globulin if given soon enough may protect the mother and the baby from the virus. One attack of German measles gives immunity for life. Many mothers may already have been immunized by even a mild attack in their childhood.

The terrible consequences of the most dreaded disease, syphilis can be avoided by early treatment. The unborn child catches the disease during the last three months of pregnancy. If, the mother acquires this disease earlier, she can spare her child the devastating effects of this disease by early treatment.

Strange is the compensation of nature. Bacterial infections hardly ever affect the unborn. Even if the mother suffers from

smallpox, chicken pox, ordinary measles or even polio, the unborn child hardly runs any risk of malformation.

(c) **Rh Factor.**—The Rh factor, which sounds so mysterious, is a condition which may affect the baby in the womb, but leaves the mother perfectly healthy. It is actually not a disease but a case of incompatibility between the mother's blood and the baby's. There can be other kinds of incompatibility, resulting from other blood factors, but the Rh type is by far the most important.

What is an Rh factor anyway? It is a substance found in the red blood cells of five out of six people. If you have it, your blood is called Rh positive; if not, Rh negative.

If a mother who does not have this Rh substance in her blood (Rh negative) becomes pregnant, and if her husband is Rh positive, the baby, too may have the Rh substance. In a few cases the mother's blood stream may organize to fight the intruding Rh chemical, and some of the antibodies from her blood may invade the baby's system and destroy his red blood cells. In that case, the baby may be still-born, or may die during the first days of life, or may suffer from brain damage unless properly treated.

These cases are fortunately uncommon. Even if a woman is Rh negative and is carrying a Rh positive baby, there is only one chance in sixteen that the baby may be affected. More important still, if the baby is affected, the condition can be successfully treated immediately after birth by exchange blood transfusion.

It is important to remember that one in two hundred babies does not live, one in a hundred is seriously handicapped and ten per cent of the babies may have a minor defect of being imperfectly formed. The above precautions will not only reduce the number of still-born and seriously handicapped babies but will also reduce minor malformations to about two per cent.

The author started the social welfare work by founding the Chhaproo Vidya Mandal for the needy at Karachi in 1913 and became its first Hon. Secretary Treasurer. This migrated to Bombay in 1947. It will celebrate its Golden Jubilee in 1963. At the Second Annual Conference of the Association of Otolaryngologists of India in Bombay (1949) he advocated in his presidential address the

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prevention and amelioration of deafness with massive doses of vitamin A, Deaf Clinics in Taluka towns, Deaf clubs with speech therapists, and visiting (mobile) E.N.T. Units. Similarly, in his Presidential Address at the Fourth Annual Conference at Calcutta (1951) he re-emphasised the above ideas and further advocated the cheapening and manufacture of hearing aids. His resolutions at the Deaf Seminar (1955) are already discussed. Through the recommendations of the National Advisory Council, the National Physical Laboratory has produced a prototype indigenous hearing aid a few years back.

The primary purpose of the preceding pages has been to describe briefly the growth of services for the handicapped. But no historical account is complete without an assessment of our past performance and suggestions springing from practical experience for future improvements.

A glance at Governmental effort during the first two plan periods would appear to indicate that in spite of the desire to help the handicapped which is made abundantly clear by the provisions made in the two plans, our achievements have been very far from satisfactory. Large sums of money intended for the welfare of the handicapped remained unutilised. Faced with this situation one cannot help feeling that Government machinery for dealing with this type of work needs to be completely reoriented.

The provision of services for the handicapped is very expensive. The participation of the State in this endeavour is, therefore, of vital importance. The problem of providing effective governmental machinery for implementing schemes for the handicapped has consequently for sometime past been engaging the attention of the National Advisory Council for the Education of the Handicapped and many social workers. It is strongly felt that this work should be handled by an autonomous body with wide executive powers. The Government of India could either invest the National Advisory Council for the Education of the Handicapped with executive powers or hand over the work for the handicapped to the Central Social Welfare Board.



Despite the initiative taken by the Government of India a certain lack of interest in this problem was evinced by most of the State Governments. This is unfortunate and must be remedied. Perhaps one way in which this situation can improve is for the various State Governments to establish State Councils for the Education of the Handicapped.

It is important to emphasise here that the success of any service for the handicapped depends very largely on its flexibility and its ability to maintain the human touch. These human qualities can best be developed by voluntary agencies. It is, therefore, of the greatest importance that voluntary agencies should continue to play a leading role in the development and consolidation of services for the handicapped. It is essential that voluntary agencies should strengthen themselves by rising above parochialism, shedding petty rivalries and by adopting the most modern organizational techniques in order to provide the most effective service for the cause to which they are so devoted.

In most of the advanced countries a very large share of the responsibility for providing services for the handicapped is borne by local bodies. We find however that in this country municipalities and corporations have hardly participated in this task. The time has come when local bodies and even *panchayats* should in due course undertake responsibility for providing welfare services including services for the handicapped.

Finally, it must be confessed that modern services for the handicapped were largely inspired by the influence of Western Culture. One of the inevitable effects of this has been the tendency for these services to be urbanised. The effects of large scale urbanisation on the handicapped have been even more disastrous than on normal persons. It must be appreciated that India is a predominantly rural country and its services for the handicapped must eventually be reoriented taking into account indigenous conditions. Handicapped persons belong to every community, services for them should be equally varied and an attempt made to meet their needs in the situations in which they are placed.

The object of the author is not to make detailed suggestions

for the development of particular services, but merely an attempt to enunciate certain general principles whose adoption, in his view, is likely to give the right orientation to services for the handicapped.

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## CHAPTER

# 24

### *Welfare of the Mentally Handicapped*

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For the purposes of this chapter the term, mentally handicapped will include functional psychoses (insanities), psychoneuroses, psychopathy, alcohol and drug addictions, organic psychoses, i.e., insanities caused by organic diseases, in adults, and psychiatric illnesses of children like functional and organic psychoses, psychoneuroses, behaviour problems caused by emotional maladjustment, and mental deficiency.

**Mental Disease.**—Prejudice against mental disease is still rampant in our country, particularly in small towns and villages. People still believe that mental illness is caused by some mysterious agencies like possession of the individual by evil spirit or, it is a kind of punishment for sins committed in the past life. Some people believe that working with 'crazy' people makes one crazy. Some people seriously feel that psychiatrists are half crazy; otherwise, how can they understand 'mad' people; psychiatrists are imagined to have uncanny powers of reading other people's mind. A patient, who telephoned to the writer for some instructions about the medicine that was prescribed to him, was asked how he felt. He replied that he felt better. After this conversation he felt very depressed because he thought that the writer had divined the truth that he (the patient) was not well and that he had told a lie. Psychiatrists are sometimes shunned in society by some people who think that if they are seen in the company of a psychiatrist, others will put two and two together and draw their own conclusions. A patient of the writer insisted that he should be seen at

12.15 p.m. only so that, after the session was over, he could go straight for his lunch without being observed by anybody. Once when the writer offered him a lift in his car, he refused the offer saying that he did not want to be seen with the writer. Consultants and general practitioners find it extremely difficult to persuade their patients suffering from a neurosis or a psychosomatic disorder to consult a psychiatrist protesting that they are not 'mad'. This belief that psychiatrists treat insane people only is deep-rooted. It is because of this that patients referred by doctors hesitate to go to a psychiatrist.

Is mental illness on the increase? This question has been put to the writer again and again by both laymen and medical men alike. The impression that mental diseases are on the increase is obtained by the following facts: owing to recent advances in the treatment of mental disorders, a large number of patients are cured or benefited. More people avail themselves of the prevailing psychiatric facilities which were not existing 20 years ago. Reports in foreign medical journals and popular magazines about recent advances in psychiatric treatment and the importance that is given to psychosomatic disorders and mental illnesses by the medical people in countries like the U.S.A. and the U.K. have certainly contributed a great deal to psychiatric awareness among our people.

Freud considered that the liability to neurosis is the price that the civilized man must pay for his cultural advancement. He also stressed that the tempo of modern life and the increasing demands made by society on the individual make adjustment difficult for him.

There are in the U.S.A. about 586 mental hospitals. It is estimated that about 16,000,000 people in that country have some form of mental or nervous illness, i.e., one in ten persons suffers from a mental disease. They have about 4,500 beds (for mental patients) per million of population. In 1956 there were 9,295 qualified psychiatrists who were members of the American Psychiatric Association, a number which is considered inadequate to meet the needs of the mentally ill.

In England, there are about 100 mental hospitals and about

300 child guidance clinics. One person in every 256 is in a mental hospital. There are 300,000 mental defectives, and one in every 125 persons is mentally retarded. In England, on December 31, 1957, the total number of patients under care was 146,962, out of which 143,220 were in mental hospitals.<sup>1</sup> According to Dr. C. P. Blacker,<sup>2</sup> the needs of an area of a million would be satisfactorily met by four mental hospitals of about a thousand beds each.

In India, there are only 19 to 20 mental hospitals. The number of beds available in all the mental hospitals in the country is not more than 15,000. There is accommodation for about 35 beds only per million of population. The Bhore Committee Report recommend a total of 800,000 beds i.e., 2,000 beds per million of population. The actual need, according to the Report, is 1,800,000 beds. In the whole of India there are not more than 10 child guidance clinics, five of them being in Greater Bombay; and there are not more than 80 qualified psychiatrists in the whole of the country.

Thus it will be seen that in India we have not yet touched even the fringe of the problem of mental illness.<sup>3</sup>

**Mental Hygiene.**—Mental Hygiene essentially deals with the promotion of mental health among all people in general as also with the prevention and early treatment of neuroses, psychoses, character and personality disorders, and other types of maladjustments of adults and children. It concerns itself with the main objective of the bringing about greater happiness, efficiency and ability to get along with others. Mental hygiene is a composite science based on principles drawn from psychology, psychiatry, child development, education, sociology, anthropology, biology and medicine.

People with good mental health have minimum of mental conflicts so that they have not much difficulty in coming to a quick and correct decision. They have a satisfactory working capa-

<sup>1</sup>*Mental Health*, XVII, 4, 1958, 140.

<sup>2</sup>C. P. Blacker, *Neurosis and the Mental Health Services*, London: Oxford University Press, 1946, pp. 80-82.

<sup>3</sup>J. C. Marfatia, "The Problem of Mental Disease," *Current Medical Practices*, II, 4, (April, 1958), pp. 219-222.

city; they put in maximum amount of work with optimum efficiency; they love their work and are able to carry on without frequently changing their jobs unless there was a good reason for doing so. They can accept their own shortcomings without losing sight of their assets and have a tolerant attitude towards themselves as well as towards others. They are able to love others, trust others and feel that they will be trusted and loved in return. They respect other people's viewpoints and feel a sense of responsibility to their families and fellow men. They make good friends, good workers, good marriage partners, good parents, and good citizens.

Mental hygiene and social work have common goals, namely, human betterment and promotion of healthy human relationship. A social worker has to work with parents, children, families married couples, employers, employees, in short areas of human relationship where a thorough knowledge of the dynamics of personality development and a thorough grounding in the principles of mental hygiene are absolutely essential. Similarly, a mental hygienist can help an individual only if he studies that individual as a whole in his total setting which includes his social, economic and cultural background. Thus it is evident that mental hygiene and social work are inter-related, inter-dependent and inextricably interwoven with each other. It is a well-known and accepted fact that the social worker is an important member of what is known as the mental hygiene team composed of a psychiatrist, psychiatric social worker and psychologist. It is responsible for carrying out activities in the various fields of mental hygiene, namely, medicine and public health, education, delinquency, industry and social work.

If the sad and miserable plight of the mentally handicapped has to be improved by proper preventive and curative treatment the following measures must be implemented as soon as possible:

**I. Training of Psychiatrists.**—In India in general the mental hospital services and mental organizations are, to say the least, very primitive. There are several causes for the shockingly poor quality of mental service, one of the chief causes being inadequate financial provision. However, there are other causes also, the

important one being the fact that, mental hospitals with the exception of a few are run under the direction of superintendents who do not possess a special postgraduate qualification in psychiatry. They are not familiar with the recent trends and modern advances in the treatment and management of mental patients. Recently, this situation has been remedied by some of the State Governments by sending their candidates for training and acquiring qualifications in psychiatry to the two Universities, namely, the University of Bombay and the Mysore University which give the postgraduate diploma in psychiatry, known as Diploma in Psychological Medicine. These qualified psychiatrists are then appointed superintendents of various mental hospitals in their respective States.

Considering the requirements of our country the process of producing new psychiatrists is painfully slow, as not more than 30 psychiatrists are trained every year. There is a very great scarcity of qualified psychiatrists in India the number not exceeding 75 to 80 in all. Taking the minimum figure of 1,000,000 insane patients in the country who need proper treatment in mental hospitals, and taking the ratio of doctors to patients at one doctor to two hundred patients (the ratio of one doctor to fifty patients would be adequate), the number of psychiatrists working in mental hospitals needed in the country would be at least 5,000. Even supposing the number of psychiatrists turned out every year is 50, (actually not more than 30 are trained every year), it would require 100 years to have an adequate number of psychiatrists to meet the needs of the insane patients in mental hospitals.

**II. Improved Teaching of Students in Psychiatry.**—Even among medical men psychiatric awareness is not to the extent as one would expect it to be. Medical students do not show much interest in the subject and a very few want to take up psychiatry as a subject of specialization. The main reason for this apathy is that this subject is not compulsory in the sense that no questions on psychiatry are set in the medicine paper in the final M.B.B.S. examination. No wonder that this lapse on the part of the authorities concerned gives a false impression to the medical student that psychiatry is not an important subject. Thus it is necessary



to make one or two questions from psychological medicine (psychiatry) compulsory.

The University of Bombay introduced a postgraduate Diploma in Psychological Medicine in 1954. It may be noted that the new College of Nursing started in 1960 has included in its curriculum courses on normal psychology, psychiatry, psychosomatic medicine and psychiatric nursing, similar to the courses for the undergraduate medical students. Let us hope that the questions asked on psychiatry in the final examination in nursing are compulsory. A step in the right direction has also been taken by the creation of posts of housemanship, registrarship and honorary clinical assistantship in the psychiatric departments of some of the general hospitals, at least in the bigger towns and cities.

**III. Training of Psychiatric Social Workers.**—Once social case work was confined to destitutes and delinquents only; today it has become a necessary part of many agencies, such as mental hospitals, child guidance clinics, general hospitals, mental hygiene clinics, public health, juvenile courts, remand homes, educational institutions, family and child welfare agencies and industry. Psychiatric knowledge is essential for social case work in any of these areas as in all of them an understanding of human personality and its relations to environment is essential. Courses in mental hygiene, psychology and psychiatry, which were once regarded essential only for the specialized field of psychiatric social work, are now an accepted part of training for all social work.

Briefly, the following are the functions of a psychiatric social worker (a) a psychiatric social worker is concerned with the treatment of the patient's social situation; (b) she studies the patient's social situation in relation to his present difficulty, such a study being based on conditions in his home, family, and his place of work. This study is then utilised in conjunction with the psychiatrist in diagnosis and treatment; (c) she interprets to the family the patient's problem and the recommendations made by the psychiatrist, and aids the patient and his family to work out a programme for a more adequate social adjustment working closely with the psychiatrist; (d) she secures the co-operation of other

social agencies and helps the patient in finding suitable employment; (e) another important function of a psychiatric social worker is to effect changes in or modify faulty attitudes of patient's relatives in so far as these attitudes contribute to the patient's illness; and (f) she acts as a liaison agent between the psychiatrist and the patient, and between the psychiatrist and those persons in the community who are concerned with the patient's welfare. It must be noted that these functions are not distinct but inter-dependent on and interwoven with each other.

The functions of a psychiatric social worker engaged in child guidance clinics are as follows: (a) she changes or modifies unhealthy parental attitudes which are responsible for the child's problem; (b) whenever it is necessary, she visits the home and studies social and economic conditions on the spot; (c) data are then studied in co-operation with the psychiatrist to bring about a healthy adjustment of the child with his environment; (d) she pays visits to the child's school, interviews the authorities and sets right those factors in the school situation which have contributed to his problem; and (e) she helps to provide recreational and play facilities and very rarely helps in the placement of the child in boarding schools or, still more rarely, in foster homes.

Even though psychiatric social work has become a specialization, not more than eight to ten psychiatric social workers are turned out every year. Out of these about half the number go in for medical social work. This specialization course is combined with psychiatric social work specialization. So far as it is known there is no other social science institute in India except the Tata Institute of Social Sciences which trains and qualifies social workers in the specialized fields of psychiatry and medical social work. Hence every year for the last 12 years or so, only five to six persons qualify to work as psychiatric social workers. As we have mentioned above, psychiatric social workers are needed in many fields of mental hygiene and psychiatry, but the number of psychiatric social workers needed for work with patients in mental hospitals only is extremely inadequate to meet the needs of the country. Taking the ratio of one psychiatric social worker to five

hundred mental patients and taking the figure 1,000,000 patients who need treatment in mental hospitals, we should have about 2,000 qualified psychiatric social workers for mental hospitals alone. Only eight to ten persons qualify every year in medical and psychiatric social work. From among them, five to six persons choose to work. Considering the fact that we have in the country not more than 60 qualified workers, it will take three to four generations before we shall meet the total requirement of 2,000 psychiatric social workers. It is essential that other social work institutes in the country start training psychiatric social workers without delay.

**IV. Establishment of Psychiatric Departments.**—Every general hospital at any rate in cities and larger towns should have a psychiatric department staffed by a mental hygiene team consisting of a psychiatrist, two psychiatric social workers and a psychologist. The actual number of each of these staff members will depend upon the number of cases. It is desirable that these psychiatric departments or units should be immediately started, particularly in teaching hospitals. It is needless to add that the psychiatrist must have a postgraduate qualification in psychiatry and the house physician and the registrar are full-time workers. The psychiatric department treats not only the out-patients but also has some psychiatric beds in a ward of the hospital. Theoretical and practical training in psychiatry can be given in these departments of general hospitals to the medical students, psychiatric social work students, nurses and to those who are receiving training in other fields of mental hygiene.

**V. Preventive Psychiatric Institutions.**—Apart from psychiatric departments in general hospitals described earlier, efforts should be made to establish independent psychiatric out-patient clinics and mental hygiene clinics for the treatment of early stages of mental disorders. The institutions must have adequate qualified personnel. Encouragement and financial support should be given to such non-governmental or voluntary organizations as are running psychiatric out-patient and mental hygiene clinics. Vocational guidance, marriage counselling and other mental health services

should be available in psychiatric departments of general hospitals, mental hygiene clinics or in government institutions specially meant for the purpose.

**VI. Improvement of Mental Hospitals.**—The extremely poor quality of mental hospital service has already been referred to. Improvement in the existing conditions in mental hospitals can be brought about by taking the following measures: (a) the most obvious thing to do is to reduce the overcrowding in mental hospitals. There should not be more than 700 to 800 mental patients in one hospital; (b) the superintendent of every mental hospital must be a qualified psychiatrist holding a Diploma in Psychological Medicine; (c) the number of doctors must be increased so that there is a ratio of one doctor to seventy-five to hundred patients; (d) every mental hospital must have on its staff qualified psychiatric social workers and there should be at least one psychiatric social worker to 500 mental patients; (e) there should be a fully equipped occupational therapy department with a fully qualified occupational therapist directing the activities; (f) games and other recreational outlets must be provided; (g) there should be an adequate number of nurses, preferably those who have specialized in psychiatric nursing. There should be one nurse to about fifty patients; (h) changes in the legal procedure for certifying mental patients should be brought forth. "The present legal procedure of sending insane patients to mental hospitals is such as to cause a lot of hardship to patients and their relatives. A clause which would provide relief to the relatives of patients should be added to the existing Lunacy Act, similar to Emergency Order existing in the U.K. and several European countries. Emergency orders should empower qualified psychiatrists to make temporary arrangements for patients, even for those who are dangerous to others and to themselves, particularly when admission to mental hospitals is not possible on account of lack of accommodation. Such an arrangement would enable patients to be admitted to psychiatric nursing homes certified by Government for the purpose, where they can be observed, treated, and ultimately discharged on recovery, or sent to a mental hospital after the usual legal

procedure of certification. Besides, in view of the fact that the existing Indian Lunacy Act is obsolete, it is recommended that it should be revised immediately by appropriate legislation along the lines of the draft of the Mental Health Act presented by the Indian Psychiatric Society to the Government of India in 1950";<sup>4</sup> (i) there are not more than 19 to 20 big hospitals in the whole of India and, as mentioned before, this number is totally inadequate to meet the needs of the country. In view of the financial stringency and inadequate resources, it is unpractical to build at least many more hospitals at present. When the task of building new mental hospitals is undertaken, it should be borne in mind that in order to avoid stigmatization of any kind, they should be so constructed, and their working so organized, that they do not differ from other general hospitals. Follow-up and after-care facilities are a vital necessity. For complete rehabilitation of the patient, every effort must be made to help him to find a suitable job, and provide him with the right environment for working and living. Family and community backing and co-operation are essential to make rehabilitation successful. If the prejudice and stigma against mental disease are removed, employers will not hesitate to employ the mentally rehabilitated persons; and (j) there should be day hospitals for the less seriously disturbed insane patients. The day hospital is a new institution in the field of prophylaxis and treatment of mental disorders. "A Day Hospital may be defined as a place where an attempt is made to make available, as far as is possible, every type of treatment provided by a modern intra-mural department together with all the advantages and privileges enjoyed by patients in an extra-mural department. The Day Hospital does not belong to the era of Individual Psychiatry, nor to the era of orthodox psychoanalysis. It is part, or the forerunner of an era which may be called tentatively the era of social psychiatry and syntho-analytical psychotherapy—Social Psychiatry is the science which aims at the prevention and treatment of the suffering and

<sup>4</sup>Indian Conference of Social Work. "Mental Hygiene and Social Welfare." *A Report prepared by the Indian Conference of Social Work*, 1958, pp. 40-41.

poorly integrated individual and/or group in its universal setting. Universal setting implies all causes, including those of environment and relationship on the one hand and constitution and psychology on the other.”<sup>5</sup>

Day hospitals would help to reduce overcrowding in mental hospitals; they would turn out to be financially more economical.

**VII. Refresher and Orientation Courses.**—In view of the fact that there is not enough psychiatric awareness not only among the public but also among general medical practitioners and medical consultants, refresher courses on subjects, like Mental Hygiene or Psychiatry in General Practice or Psychosomatic Medicine, etc., should be arranged by organizations like medical unions or societies, mental hygiene associations or institutes, psychological association, or mental hygiene departments conducted by the Government. General medical practitioners constitute the first line of defence and hence it is imperative that they should have enough psychiatric orientation to be able to detect early serious mental illnesses and refer them to the specialists or to treat patients with minor emotional problems. Such refresher or orientation courses should also be given to social workers, public health officers, public health nurses, health visitors and family and child welfare workers.

Almost all psychiatrists are agreed that the personality development occurs during the first six years of life, and it is during this formative period of life that the foundations of a healthy or unhealthy personality are laid. It is also generally accepted that the seeds of neuroses and psychoses and other mental disorders are sown in childhood. It is therefore, evident, that courses of instructions in the basic principles of child up-bringing and in the understanding of the fundamental emotional needs of the child should be given to those who are closely associated with the welfare of children, namely, expectant mothers or those who have become mothers recently (for whom facilities should exist in antenatal and postnatal clinics), parents, nursery school teachers, primary school teachers, health visitors, pediatricians, matrons of

<sup>5</sup>Joshua Bierer, *The Day Hospital*, London: H. K. Lewis & Co., Ltd. 1951.

orphanages and boarding schools, health visitors and, family and child welfare workers.

**VIII. Child Guidance Clinics.**—Stevenson and Smith say, “child guidance attempts to marshall the resources of the community in behalf of children who are in distress because of unsatisfied inner needs, or are seriously at outs with their environment—children whose development is thrown out of balance by difficulties which reveal themselves in unhealthy traits, unacceptable behaviour, or inability to cope with social and scholastic expectations.”<sup>6</sup>

A child guidance clinic is one of the medico-social amenities and may be best defined as a centre for the organized and scientific study and treatment of maladjustment in children. The types of emotional problems treated at such a clinic are—thumbsucking, nailbiting, bedwetting, extreme general restlessness, stammering, feeding problems, shyness, sensitiveness, jealousy, obstinacy, temper tantrums, truancy, stealing, scholastic backwardness owing to emotional causes, neuroses and psychosomatic disorders. Cases of psychoses (insanities) and mental deficiency are not treated at such a centre. Each one of the problems mentioned above is not a diseased entity but it is a manifestation or symptom of a disordered maladjusted personality. Hence the treatment is directed to the child as a whole in his total setting. As the total personality has many facets or aspects, namely, physical, intellectual, educational, emotional, social and economic, each one of these aspects is studied by the respective staff member of the mental hygiene team who has specialized in that particular field. Thus the mental hygiene team consists of a psychiatrist, psychiatric social worker, a psychologist, and a pediatrician. If the clinic cannot afford the services of a pediatrician, the psychiatrist can look after the physical aspect of the personality.

The principles of child guidance treatment are: (a) removal of the problem for which the child is referred; (b) the child is treated as a whole in his total setting; (c) the total personality of the child is studied and treated in order to make him better

<sup>6</sup>George S. Stevenson and Geddes Smith. *Child Guidance Clinics*, New York: The Commonwealth Fund, 1934. p. 1.

adapted to his environment and bring about harmonious relationship between himself and others; (d) to bring about harmonious relations between the parents in so far as the lack of these is causing the child's misbehaviour; (e) to alter or modify such faulty parental attitudes as are responsible for the child's maladjustment; and (f) parents themselves may be suffering from a neurosis or a psychosis and it may become necessary to treat them.

Thus it is evident that child guidance clinics have come to be regarded as an important endeavour in the field of preventive psychiatry. The child guidance clinic has also become an ideal centre for postgraduate training in psychiatry as also for training of social workers for psychiatric social work, and for the training of nurses and health visitors. It can function as a centre for the propagation of mental hygiene principles to teachers, parents, doctors, social workers and probation officers.

There are only eight to ten child guidance clinics in the whole of India. Out of these five are in Greater Bombay with a population of 4,000,000, i.e., one child guidance clinic to 800,000 people. The actual need for the country as a whole is one child guidance clinic to 100,000 people. In progressive countries government departments of Mental Health and departments of Public Health and Education provide child guidance service. The location of child guidance clinics may be in teaching hospitals, training colleges for teachers and in schools of social work.

Provisions should be made in all children's hospitals for separate beds (at least 10 in each hospital) for the treatment of psychotic (insane) children. To the best of the writer's knowledge there is not a single children's hospital in our country which has made such a provision.

**IX. Measures to Meet the Problems of Mental Deficiency.**—Mental defectiveness is legally (The Mental Deficiency Act of 1927) defined in England as a condition of arrested or incomplete development of mind existing before the age of 18 years, whether arising from inherent causes or induced by a disease or injury. The same definition operates in our country.

Babies are born every minute. About two to three per cent



of all these will be considered mentally retarded sometime during their lives. They add up to a great many people and a great many individual and family problems are created. Hence mental deficiency becomes a social problem of immense magnitude. Three per cent of the total population of the U.S.A. i.e., 4,800,000 American children and adults are mentally retarded. There are in England and Wales some 300,000 mentally defective persons.

In the Child Guidance Clinic of the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Bombay, where the writer is working, during a period of seven years, from July 1950 to June 1957, 982 new cases were referred. Out of these, 237 cases, i.e., 24.13 per cent were found to have an I.Q. below normal. Of these 237 a great majority were referred for mental retardation, whereas the rest of them were referred for behaviour problems, and a low I.Q. was an incidental finding. Thus it will be seen that about one-fourth of the case load in the Clinic is constituted of mentally retarded children. The two other child guidance clinics in Bombay with which the writer is connected are also cluttered up with mentally retarded children.

Since no other form of psychiatric service caters to the needs of mentally retarded children, and till such time as we have more special schools (there are only one or two such schools in the whole of India), it is inevitable that child guidance clinics will have to fill up this gap. There is inadequate personnel and the diagnostic services are very deficient. Physicians show deplorable lack of interest in this field of medicine. Pediatricians are just beginning to realize the vastness of this problem. Even psychiatrists have shown a woeful lack of interest in this field of psychiatry and are known to wash their hands off these cases by just telling the parents, "nothing can be done in this case". Educationists, who should be very much interested in this problem, would not just be bothered by children who cannot learn normally.

The problems created by the mentally defective persons are many. A large number of the problems of the mentally retarded is due not directly to their intellectual defect but to their inability to adjust to the demands made on them by the society. Without understanding the true nature of the handicap, the persons coming

in contact with them expect from them such a degree of achievement in accordance with their chronological age as they would from the normal persons. Failure to live up to these expectations leads to constant frustration. Very few parents are able to accept the mentally defective person for what he is.

The atmosphere of continual frustration and rejection in the home makes for a serious social maladjustment. The child may become a bone of contention between his father and mother who frequently blame each other for his shortcomings. This disharmony between the parents makes the child's feeling of rejection even more acute. It is the family, therefore, that needs the utmost help in learning to accept the feeble-minded child.

The brothers and sisters are also slow in accepting their defective sibling and may even be ashamed of taking him out with them for fear of being teased or ridiculed by other children.

Parents of subnormal children often show anxiety about the future prospects of marriage of their normal children and a fear of their progeny proving defective.

Temper tantrums are extremely frequent in mental defectives particularly in the case of those having over-anxious parents. Muscular activity of the mentally retarded is limited which may cause extreme restlessness. Toilet training is difficult and bedwetting is found quite frequently.

Defective girls are in constant danger of being sexually seduced. Some defectives, particularly girls, are physically developed beyond the average. There is lack of adequate and normal control over their sexual behaviour which frequently leads to open masturbation.

Mentally subnormal children are emotionally and socially immature. The adult defectives fail to keep jobs resulting in chronic unemployment. Mental retardation is one of the most important factors in the causation of juvenile delinquency, and crime in adults. The mentally defective women also take to prostitution.

A mentally retarded child is unable to keep pace with normal children in studies, and if he is allowed to drift along with them at school, it does considerable harm to his personality.

(a) There is a growing need for both special day-schools

and residential special schools, the latter particularly for children who need care away from home because of lack of such schools in their own towns, or because of other social problems.<sup>7</sup> We have in Bombay two such special schools, one of them being 'The School for Children in Need of Special Care' run by the Society for the Care, Treatment and Training of Children in Need of Special Care. It is both a day-school and a special school with residential facilities.

Separate schooling in special schools provides a more suitable curriculum, a better organized daily routine and bright and cheerful environment with diverse activities, freedom of expression and movement, occupation, etc., so that improved social adjustment is brought about. Contacts with the family must be maintained through home visits during vacations or on school holidays. Members of the family should be allowed to visit them regularly at other times.

(b) Training of teachers for the education of the mentally retarded must be carried out on a large scale. Professional training of this type is given only at the 'School for Children in Need of Special Care' in Bombay. It is a one-year Diploma course recognised by the Government of Maharashtra. The need for trained teachers is very great and professional training programmes on a large scale are needed. In the Soviet Union specially trained teachers receive salaries 25 per cent higher than teachers in regular school programmes.<sup>8</sup>

(c) "Day Care Centres", run on the lines suggested by Dr. F. E. Kratter, Acting Superintendent, Caswell Training School, Kinston, North Carolina, U.S.A. would in a great measure meet the needs of the mentally retarded. The Day Care Centre is the place where the child can be taken for a few hours a day each week; it is a centre where children with varying degrees of intelligence have the opportunity of rehabilitation on a non-residential basis.

<sup>7</sup>J. C. Marfatia, "The Problem of Mental Deficiency," *The Indian Journal of Child Health*, VIII, 5, (May 1959).

<sup>8</sup>"Education in U.S.S.R." *Bulletin*, No. 14, 1957.

(d) Diagnostic services should be available not only in child guidance clinics, but also in general hospitals, in special schools, in schools for normal children where qualified psychologists are on the school staff, and in vocational guidance bureaux whether run by the Government or educational institutions.

(e) The health programme for the mentally retarded should form an integral part of public health and medical services. It could be a part of family and child welfare services. The Departments of Health, Education and Social Welfare must make a co-ordinated approach to the problems of prevention of mental deficiency, and treatment and rehabilitation of the mentally sub-normal. Efforts are directed towards special training of teachers to educate the mentally retarded, development of research on the prevention of mental deficiency and on educational problems in mental retardation and establishment of special schools.

The answer to those who constantly ask what justification there is in spending such large sums of money on the education of the mentally retarded when that much amount can be fruitfully used for the normal children is as follows: Mental retardation is a handicap. Just as there is no resentment at having to spend on other types of handicapped persons like the blind or the deaf or the physically crippled, similarly, there should be no heart-burning over spending on this form of handicapped children. Besides, it is our moral duty to give humane treatment to these unfortunate persons. By having special classes and special schools there is considerable lessening of parent's burden so that they can look after their other children better. A vast majority of the educable mentally defective can be helped to become useful members of the society. In this era of successive five-year plans India can ill afford to lose the amount of work (unskilled labour) that can be made available from mentally retarded persons by tactful handling. They can be excellent workers in monotonous and routine work which would affect the output of work in normal persons. Since monotony and routine do not affect the mentally retarded, the output of work does not suffer. Finally, training and rehabilitation of the mentally

defective will prevent delinquency and will also check any deterioration of the personality which would be inevitable without special training.

(f) Since 1944 about 200 occupational centres have been maintained in Great Britain for the trainable mentally defective. The local Health Department is responsible for the supervision. There is an emphasis on craft work and there is enough material for the nucleus for the development of sheltered workshops. Transport facilities have been provided to take them to these centres and bring them back.

(g) There is a woeful lack of special training facilities for the mentally retarded in rural areas not only in India but all over the world. Owing to lack of trained personnel and paucity of economic resources, special schools in villages could not be started, but one would ask, would it be desirable to send the mentally defective from villages to cities where there are special schools. Apart from the fact that most of the parents cannot afford the expenses involved, the child who has found adjustment not difficult in a village setting will be a complete stranger to new surroundings and he will have to make a new adjustment.

At the Indian Conference of Social Work held at Bangalore in 1956 it was suggested that we should have for villages mobile vans carrying trained persons, who would educate parents in the training of mental defectives and make them aware of the types of services available in the cities for the training and rehabilitation of mental defectives. The suggestion encouraged others to ask, "where is the trained personnel? Are there enough psychiatrists, psychiatric social workers or qualified psychologists to constitute the personnel of mobile vans for 558,089 villages and 3,018 small towns in India?" A social worker pointed out that it would be much better if the mental defective was allowed to be adequately rehabilitated in the village setting only. A mental defective removed from such a setting, she said, to a city institution for mental defectives, would not only be completely at sea in such surroundings, but he would, in addition, be deprived completely of family

life which had a stabilising influence on him so far. He would be like a fish out of water. In the village a mental defective is considered as part and parcel not only of the family but also of the whole community. He has a sense of belonging, resulting from his being accepted by the community for what he is. No heavy demands are made on him. It is no strain on him to adjust to an environment free from unhealthy competition, rivalry and jealousy. He looks after cows and buffaloes, takes to cattle grazing, cleans the stables, milks cows, draws water from wells, and does many other useful, though unskilled, chores which would relieve the burden of other members of the family. Village conditions are an ideal setting for rehabilitation of mental defectives. The writer, in agreeing with the above views of the social worker, does not think that it is setting the clock back in meeting with the problem of the rehabilitation of mental defectives in villages, particularly because, big cities at present have practically nothing constructive to offer to these unfortunate persons.

(h) There is not a single institute for the mentally deficient in the whole of India. When such institutions are built, they should be constructed and planned on Colony System as in the U.K. "Two States in the U.S.A., New York and Ohio, have announced plans for five new major institutions for the mentally retarded to be included in building programmes for the mentally ill.

"New York will erect a \$50 million State school for the mentally retarded along with a psychiatric hospital for mentally ill children on a 500-acre site at West Seneca, N.Y.

"Ohio, as part of a twenty-one institution program for the mentally ill, which will cost at least \$150,930,000, plans four new schools for the mentally retarded...."

One may conclude quoting the words of the National Mental Health Foundation, U.S.A. "Perhaps we shall always have the mentally retarded with us. But they need not be a 'problem'. If we but understand them they will arouse our sympathy, but

<sup>9</sup>*Project News*, "Developments in the Field of Mental Retardation," published by American Association of Mental Deficiency, II, 3 (September 1958).

not make us feel they are a disgrace....They will move us to seek intelligent care for them in the home...practical training in the public school...a fairer chance for them to make good in the community...more adequate provision for good institutional care. A wise society will make room for all, including 'the least of these.'<sup>10</sup>

**Research work.**—In order to meet the challenging problem of mental illness, research in the prevention, causation and treatment of mental diseases is absolutely essential. No such research has been carried out in our country. Research projects should be encouraged and supported by Government or State departments of mental health.

"A Central Department of Mental Hygiene and State Departments for Mental Hygiene should be established in such of the states where this is possible, through the availability of duly qualified and senior psychiatrists with knowledge and experience of mental hygiene and social psychiatry, not only to carry out research, but also for the administration of mental health services and the co-ordination of the work of the various types of psychiatric and mental health institutions and clinics operating in the country."<sup>11</sup>

**Conclusion.**—In conclusion one may say that, "the whole course of the history of medical psychology (psychiatry) is punctuated by the medical man's struggle to rise above the prejudices of all ages in order to identify himself with the psychological realities of his patients. Every time such an identification was achieved the medical man became a psychiatrist. The history of psychiatry is essentially the history of humanism. Every time humanism has diminished or degenerated into mere philanthropic sentimentality, psychiatry has entered a new ebb. Every time the

<sup>10</sup>Michael J. Begab. "A Social Work Approach to the Mentally Retarded and Their Families," *American Journal of Mental Deficiency*, LXIII, 3 (November 1958), p. 529.

<sup>11</sup>Indian Conference of Social Work. *A Report of the Subcommittee on Mental Hygiene and Social Welfare*, 1958, p. 42.

spirit of humanism has risen, a new contribution to psychiatry has been made."<sup>12</sup>

When people will learn to consider mental diseases as much diseases as typhoid, pneumonia, appendicitis or fracture, and to consider suicidal attempts, homicidal attacks, acute catatonic schizophrenia, refusal to eat, as much emergencies as perforated appendix or strangulated hernia, more than half the battle against mental illness will have been won.

<sup>12</sup>Gregory Zilboorg. *A History of Medical Psychology*, New York: W. W. Norton and Co., Inc., 1941, pp. 524-525.





## CHAPTER

# 25

### *Medical Social Work*

S. H. PATHAK M.A. (Indiana)

DURING the nineteenth century great scientific progress was made in the field of medicine. The germ theory of disease and the organic approach to the diagnosis and treatment of disease contributed in no small measure to the beginning of a scientific era in medicine. With the great advance in the development of a scientific body of knowledge and the discovery of several mechanical aids for diagnosis and treatment of illness, specialization and institutional medical care became inevitable. Industrial revolution and the consequent growth of big cities where a large section of the population lived in poverty, ignorance and in unhygienic slum areas also contributed to the increasing number of people seeking medical care from free hospitals and clinics. More and more patients began to be treated away from home in hospitals and clinics, where several specialists attended on them. Separation from home and adjustment to the strange, impersonal atmosphere of hospitals created new difficulties for the patients. In the busy hospitals and clinics many specialists saw the patient only for a very short time and there was no one to study and understand the patient as a person in his total situation. Gradually, a need was felt for someone who could study the total background of a patient including his physical, cultural, psychological and social factors. He also should share this understanding with the physician and work on the social aspects of illness in order to make medical treatment effective. Medical social work came into existence to meet this need.

Religious and humanitarian motives have inspired people through the centuries to work for the care and welfare of the sick and the disabled section of the society in every country. The beginning of medical social work as we understand today is, however, traced to the time when lady almoners and medical social workers were appointed in England and in the U.S.A. As a result of the efforts of Charles Loch, a leader of the London Charity Organization Society, the first almoner was appointed in 1895 in the Royal Free Hospital of London, mainly to prevent the abuse of hospital by patients who were able to pay for their treatment. Gradually, the work of the almoner changed from this negative task to the positive one of working for the "cure and social betterment of patients." In 1905 owing to the initiative of Dr. Richard Cabot, the first medical social worker was appointed in the Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston.

Rendering direct service to the patients by practising social case work is the primary function of a medical social worker. He has to work with those patients who are unable to accept the medical diagnosis and to continue the treatment regularly due to social emotional factors. He interprets the diagnostic procedures and the medical treatment to the patients. He attempts to remove the fears, anxieties and worries of the patients. He listens patiently and sympathetically to their complaints about hospital rules and regulations they find irksome and helps them to adjust to the hospital setting. He provides them with material help like food, clothing, money for transport and artificial limbs and jobs to maintain their family. Not always the medical social worker is able to help successfully all patients because resources are limited and work is heavy or because they are not sufficiently motivated to take help and use it effectively. The medical social worker helps with diagnosis, treatment, rehabilitation and prevention. In rendering direct service to the patients, he utilises his relationship with them, his special knowledge about human behaviour and about people who are ill, the resources within the individual and the family, and the resources within the community. He also uses his skill in understanding the problems of the patients and in

working with them in a scientific manner to help to solve their problems.

There are many common elements between the practice of social case work in a medical setting and in other settings. At the same time, there are important differences also. The specific aspects of social case work in medical setting, however, need to be mentioned here.

The focus of social case work in the medical setting is on the social aspects of the patient's illness, treatment and rehabilitation. The medical social worker does not work with every patient coming to a hospital or clinic. He works mainly with those patients who have medical social problems. "Medical Social problems exist when either the medical aspects in a case situation impinge on the social, or the social aspects on the medical or both. The medical social worker's focus is on the inter-action of the two more than on the totality of the medical or the social."<sup>1</sup>

The medical social worker must have specialized knowledge about people who are physically ill, and about their psychological reactions to illness. He needs to know how most of the people who are ill behave in a situation of stress and physical discomfort caused by their illness. Illness has different conscious and unconscious meaning to individuals. For a proper understanding of the patient and his problem in a medical setting, the medical social worker must understand the meaning of the illness to the individual, and also the meaning of illness to his family. The meaning of illness to an individual, his family and his associates differ depending upon the possible combination of many factors, such as his personality, social conditions, ways of becoming ill, methods of treatment and possible result of illness. The other main functions of the medical social worker are the following: (1) participation in programme planning and policy formulation of the agency; (2) participation in community organization; (3) participation in educational programmes; (4) participation in social research; and (5) consultation.

<sup>1</sup>Grace White, "The Distinguishing Characteristics of Medical Social Work," *Medical Social Work*, I, 1, September 1951, p. 31.

From the experience gained in serving the individual patient and from his professional knowledge, the medical social worker is able to recognize the gaps in the services of the agency or the need for modification of policies and procedures which are necessary for providing better and more effective service. This knowledge and experience is shared by the social worker with other members of the hospital staff.

By collecting and analysing facts about the needs of the people in the community and utilising these, the medical social worker helps the agencies to provide comprehensive medical care to the people or provide services necessary for the promotion and maintenance of the health of the people. He also helps the community to make better use of the service offered by the social and health agencies in the community, by co-ordinating and integrating the available services.

The medical social worker has to share the responsibility in providing adequate field work experience and supervision for social work students who are placed under him. In addition to this, the social worker also participates in the training for professions like medicine, nursing and public health nursing in order to give him the necessary understanding about the social, emotional and environmental factors in illness and its treatment.

The medical social worker can undertake to study the subjects directly related to medical social work or co-operate with other professional people in a multi-disciplinary study. For example, the medical social worker notices certain problems as he works with the patients and he might decide to make a study of these problems either to help the hospital or the agency to provide better medical care. He can also undertake or participate in a study of problems which are of interest and concern to medical social workers or to the field of social work as a whole. In recent years with the increased awareness of the social, emotional and environmental factors in illness, multi-discipline studies of groups of certain patients are being undertaken by the medical people. In such studies the medical social worker may be asked to participate in order to contribute the understanding of the social and

emotional aspects of the particular groups of patients to the research staff.

The medical social worker also provides consultation to the other professional members on the team of the hospital or health agency by sharing his understanding of the social and personal factors in individual cases in which they are interested.

In discussing the functions of the medical social worker, frequent reference has been made to hospitals, clinics and sanatoria. By this it is not meant that the scope of medical social work is limited to these agencies only, though historically medical social work began in hospitals in the Western countries. In later years it has gradually spread to public health settings, public welfare agencies and community health programmes also.

The broad purpose of medical care is the restoration and promotion of health and prevention of illness. For the achievement of this purpose, several professions like nursing, dietetics, occupational therapy, physio-therapy and social work, etc., co-operate with the medical profession. Though the medical service is the primary service in a hospital or clinic, the service of the other professions is equally important and necessary for effective medical care. Thus the medical social worker is one of the members of a team. In order to work as a team, all the members of the staff need to know their own area of special competence as well as the areas of special competence of other members. Proper understanding of the role of each member of the team and mutual respect for each other's contribution is essential for harmonious team relationship and better service to the patients. The medical social worker should have the necessary knowledge and skill to work as a member of a team. He should know what the appropriate functions of other members are and how to interpret his own functions to other colleagues. He should also have the skill to integrate his service with the total service of the institution.

The beginning of medical social work in India was influenced by the work of lady almoners in the United Kingdom and medical social workers in America. The physicians from India who had been to the United Kingdom and America for visits or study had

the opportunity to observe work of the almoners and medical social workers and after their return some of them were keen on starting a similar service in their hospitals or clinics. The opening of Social and Preventive Medicine departments in medical colleges and the psychiatric clinics in some of the general hospitals, the beginning of training programmes for medical social work in some of the schools of social work in Bombay and Delhi who placed students for their practical training in hospitals and clinics gave further impetus to the development of medical social work in our country.

The first medical social worker in India was appointed in 1946 in the J. J. Hospitals in Bombay. Gradually, medical social workers began to be appointed in other hospitals and clinics in the country. At present, there are medical social workers working in the States of Maharashtra, Gujarat, Delhi, Punjab, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar and West Bengal. Accurate data about the number of medical social workers in the country and the places where they are working are not available. On the basis of the available information the following table has been prepared.

TABLE I

State	City or Town	No. of Medical Social Workers
Maharashtra	Bombay	17
	Poona	1
	Oudh	1
	Panchgani	1
Gujarat	Baroda	2
	Ahmedabad	1
Delhi	Delhi	12
Punjab	Simla	1
	Amritsar	1
	Patiala	1
Madhya Pradesh	Bhopal	3
	Indore	1
	Bilaspur	1
	Gwalior	1
Rajasthan	Jaipur	1
Andhra Pradesh	Hyderabad	1
Bihar	Patna	1
	Jamshedpur	2
Total		49

West Bengal has not been included in the above table even though it is known that medical social workers have been employed in several hospitals in that State because proper information about the situation is not available. Except one or two medical social workers with a two-year postgraduate diploma in Social Work, the rest of the medical social workers had a training for nine months after graduation from the All India Institute of Social Welfare and Business Management. Very recently, however, the period of training is stated to have been extended to two years after graduation.

The situation in the Madras State is somewhat confusing. In the cancer hospital a lady social worker has been employed who had one-year generic training in social work at the Stella Maris College, Madras. The Madras branch of the Indian Red Cross Society has a training programme for health workers which used to be for a period of 10 months and has recently been extended to 18 months. This training is given upto the Matriculation standard. There are about 35 workers trained under this programme who are working in different capacities in the health agencies under the Madras Corporation. It is not clear whether these workers are employed as Medical Social Workers or with some other designation.

The total number of medical social workers in the country is probably higher than 49, as indicated in the above table and it might be about 55 to 60. Out of these two or three persons do not have any training in social work at all. Two others had social work training of varying types and duration at an undergraduate level. The remaining 40 or 45 medical social workers have completed a two-year degree or diploma course from a postgraduate school of social work. Although the first medical social worker was appointed in a general hospital and, at present, the largest number of medical social workers are working in general hospitals, medical social workers are also employed in specialized hospitals and clinics like those for tuberculosis, cancer, leprosy, women's hospitals, maternity hospitals, children's hospitals, etc. Among the specialized hospitals, T. B. hospitals and clinics have the largest



number of medical social workers and their number is likely to increase because the Directorates of Health Services of several States and Railway hospitals are considering to employ T.B. social workers. Another recent trend is the employment of medical social workers directly on the staff of the departments of social preventive medicine of the medical colleges. There are four medical social workers who have been so employed by the medical colleges in the departments of Social and Preventive Medicine, and four more medical social workers who are working in hospitals attached to medical colleges have considerable teaching responsibility. A few medical social workers are already employed in the V.D. clinics started under the auspices of the Association for Moral and Social Hygiene. Under the Employees' State Insurance schemes, medico-social aides have been employed to look after the welfare of the E.S.I.S. patient. At present, these medico-social aides do not have any social work training. In Delhi they are working under the medical social workers of the hospitals concerned. In future, there is a possibility of employment of medical social workers with a two-year postgraduate training in social work under the E.S.I.S. scheme. Thus the scope of medical social work in the country is gradually widening and holds out promise of further expansion in the future.

Except three hospitals in the country, in all other places there is only one medical social worker for the whole hospital or clinic, and they are administratively responsible directly to the superintendents of the hospitals or directors of the clinics. Wherever more than one medical social worker has been employed, the tendency is to attach them to a particular clinic in the hospital and they are responsible to the heads of the clinics. In one hospital where six medical social workers are employed, the workers had suggested that they be grouped together into one department of social service with the senior-most worker as the chief of social service. But the hospital which is a teaching hospital and has a department of Social and Preventive Medicine is said to be considering to make them responsible to the head of the department of Social and Preventive Medicine. Wherever the number of medical social

\*workers is large enough to constitute a department, it is preferable to have such a department with the senior social worker as head in order to provide integrated service and better professional standards of practice.

The salary scale of the medical social workers in the country varies a great deal. The lowest scale is Rs. 160—10—330 plus allowances. The highest scale is Rs. 260—15—440—EB—20—500 plus allowances. Most of the medical social workers get a starting basic salary of Rs. 200/- to Rs. 250/- plus allowances. Because of the low salary scale, men are reluctant to work as medical social workers as they have to support the family. Sometimes the employers express a preference for women medical social workers. For these reasons the number of women among the medical social workers is much larger than the number of men medical social workers. The male and female ratio is roughly 1:3. In the beginning, it was felt that women do not stay in the field as medical social workers for long, because they get married and leave their jobs. This fear has proved to be unfounded and there is an appreciable trend for women to stay on their jobs even after they are married.

Education for medical social work in the country started in 1948 at the Tata Institute of Social Sciences. This Institute and the Delhi School of Social Work at present offer special class-room courses in medical social work and place students in the second year in hospitals or clinics. Baroda School of Social Work which has a generic training programme also places some of the students in hospitals for field work. The Institute of Social Science, Nirmala Niketan, Bombay also provides training in medical social work. Bombay, Delhi and Baroda have adequate facilities for field work in medical social work as there are qualified medical social workers employed in the hospitals or clinics.

Major part of the medical social workers' time in India is spent in attending to the routine administrative work and in performing non-professional activities like arranging the queues at the O.P.D., directing the patients to the various departments in the hospital or clinic, distributing milk and food grains, writing

letters, distributing games equipment, magazines and books, arranging for the ambulance, etc. Most of the referrals from doctors is for the purpose of arranging for the discharge of the patients which is seen as an administrative problem and for tangible help like supply of costly medicines and prosthetic aids, payment of money for transport fare to enable the patients to attend the clinics, etc. If we consider the fact that in most of the hospitals, clinics and sanatoria there is only one medical social worker who cannot give adequate professional service to all the patients who need it, the greater part of the time spent on non-professional activities makes it almost impossible to provide any kind of professional service to the patients. This means waste of limited social resources involved in the training of the medical social workers and inadequate medical care to the patients. To illustrate the magnitude of this problem, there is one medical social worker in one of the general hospitals which has a bed-strength of 1000 and 3000 average O.P.D. attendance, and in a T.B. Clinic with 300 O.P.D. attendance there is one medical social worker who has mostly administrative work. In this clinic, during the last one year, 20 per cent of the patients who were offered hospitalisation after a long period of waiting refused it and out of those who were hospitalised 37 per cent left the hospital against medical advice. Obviously these patients need the services of the medical social worker who is unable to do anything because most of her time is taken up in administrative work.

In the present pioneering stage of medical social work in the country, the medical social workers initially have to perform non-professional activities to gain acceptance. Once the distinctive contribution of medical social work has been demonstrated, it is possible gradually to be freed from these responsibilities. Many doctors still do not have adequate understanding of the role and functions of medical social workers and they try to use them for several odd jobs not requiring any professional skill. In the education of doctors about the professional contribution of medical social work, greater responsibility lies with the medical social workers who have to demonstrate their professional competence

and contribution through daily working with patients mainly and by communication through the channels of staff conferences, going round wards, participation in the medical education, and joint meetings and conferences of doctors and medical social workers under their respective professional organizations. Today there is no adequate communication between doctors and medical social workers.

At the eleventh session of the Indian Conference of Social Work held in Hyderabad in December 1959, the participants of the workshop on Medical and Psychiatric Social Work discussed common problems and shared their experience. The report of the workshop suggested the functions of medical and psychiatric social workers in India and made several recommendations about qualifications, employment and salary of medical social workers.

“The participants felt that the medical and psychiatric social workers’ time can be better utilised in (1) dealing with social and emotional problems of patients and their families which come in the way of adequate treatment, care and rehabilitation of patients. It was also felt that (2) one of his/her major functions was to act as a liaison between the hospital, the patient, his family and the community. He/she was to interpret the treatment to the patient and his family and also the hospital to the community. It was also his/her duty (3) to bring the information of the physical and psychological environment of the patient to the doctor for better planning of his care. A medical and psychiatric social worker was expected to (4) mobilise existing community resources and develop new services where they were lacking, e.g., convalescent homes, workshops for the physically and mentally handicapped, clubs and hostels for mental patients, etc.

It was considered to be of paramount importance to have a high degree of team work between doctors, psychiatrists, nurses and occupational therapists, etc. This team work could be made use of for case discussions, seminars and research in the medical and psychiatric social fields. It was also felt that a medical and psychiatric social worker could do justice to his/her job if his/her time was utilised only for professional services mentioned above.

As regards the level of training of the medical and psychiatric social worker, it was felt that he/she should have personal qualities like sympathy, patience, maturity and objectivity and should have a two-year postgraduate diploma or degree in social work from an accredited school of social work. The training must consist of theoretical knowledge, intensive supervised field work and research experience in the field of medical and/or psychiatric social work. On the other hand, an auxiliary worker should be at least a matriculate and have some orientation regarding human behaviour and the routine job expected of her.

That every hospital for physical diseases with fifty beds and about 200 O.P.D. visits per month should at least have one medical social worker with a two-year postgraduate training in medical social work from a recognized school of social work.

That the appointment of personnel with inadequate or no training for the post of a medical or psychiatric social worker should be totally discouraged. That the scale of salary of medical or psychiatric social workers should be at least Rs. 200-10-300 E.B. 15-450 p.m. In addition to this he/she should be entitled to D.A. and a minimum conveyance allowance of Rs. 30/- p.m. Free quarters or a housing allowance of 15 per cent of the basic salary should be provided".<sup>1</sup>

During the last 15 years of Medical Social Work in this country the number of states employing social workers has increased considerably. The value of Social Work training for the job of medical social worker has been gradually recognized. The contribution of medical social work to the care of sick people is also being realized, though somewhat slowly. As in America and the United Kingdom the medical social work in India also began first in the general hospitals and later spread to the specialized hospitals and clinics. At present, the scope of medical social work in India is limited to hospitals, clinics and sanatoria. Very recently, however, there are indications of extension of medical social work in public health settings and community health programmes.

<sup>1</sup>*The Indian Journal of Social Work*, XX, 4, March 1960, pp. 129-130.

It has been pointed out earlier that there is no adequate communication and mutual exchange of information between social work and medicine in our country. The medical social workers have to take the initiative to provide channels of communication by organizing themselves into professional groups under the auspices of organizations like Indian Conference of Social Work and the Association of Alumni of Schools of Social Work. The medical social workers in Delhi have been meeting regularly once a month for the last one year to discuss common problems and share mutual experiences. They have also been inviting the leaders from medical profession to come and address them and during these meetings they have been informally discussing their problems and educating them about medical social work. The Delhi branch of the Indian Medical Association have in turn invited medical social workers to address the members of the organization. This is a very encouraging development and it is to be hoped that similar efforts will be made in other parts of the country, particularly where the number of medical social workers is large enough for such a purpose. The time has also come for a study of the practice of medical social work in the country, the conditions of work, etc., at least in cities like Bombay and Delhi where the number of medical social workers is large. Out of such a study only a clear picture of the field of medical social work in the country as well as the nature of functions of the medical social worker in the context of Indian conditions can emerge.

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## CHAPTER

# 26

## Psychiatric Social Work

(Miss) G. R. BANERJEE, D. PHIL.

PSYCHIATRIC social work as a profession had its origin in the West in the second decade of this century. However, there has been a lot of confusion about the term, psychiatric social work. As far back as 1929 two different definitions of psychiatric social work were formulated in the U.S.A. The first definition emphasises the setting in which social case work is practised. It defines psychiatric social work as "Social case work established within psychiatric agencies as a form of service essential to the medical program of such agencies."<sup>1</sup> The second definition lays stress on the qualitative aspect of the practice irrespective of setting. It defines psychiatric social work as a practice possessing certain qualities, deriving from knowledge of psychiatric concepts and from the ability to adapt them to the social case work process. According to the second definition, the work of social workers, who find new positions in family welfare agencies or child welfare agencies, has to presume that all activities of psychiatric social workers are *ipso facto* related to psychiatric social work.

A third definition has also been given that psychiatric social workers are those who work with psychiatrists as opposed to those who do not.<sup>2</sup> In that sense a social worker working in a family

<sup>1</sup>Porter R. Lee and Marion Kensworthy, *Mental Hygiene and Social Work*, New York: The Commonwealth Fund, 1929, p. 161.

<sup>2</sup>Ethel L. Ginsburg, "Psychiatric Social Work," *Orthopsychiatry*, 1923-48. Retrospect and Prospect, New York: American Orthopsychiatric Association, Inc., 1948, 470-472.



welfare agency or any agency where the service of a part time consultant psychiatrist is available will say that hers is psychiatric social work.

As psychiatric social work as a new profession in India was started about a decade ago; it is likely that unless we keep the definition clear, some confusion may arise about the term itself. There are social work agencies where some knowledge of psychiatry could be of help, and could profitably be integrated in the training of social workers practising in those set ups. For instance, a superintendent of the Home for Women in Social Distress may benefit by psychiatric orientation but her work in that set up cannot be called psychiatric social work. Again, if a Home engages a consultant psychiatrist whom the superintendent occasionally consults regarding her cases, her work cannot fall within the category of psychiatric social work.

Methods common to all social workers are used in all special fields. In the areas where social work is combined with activities of another field or profession, "differences arise from the special contribution of that field, be it criminology, education, medicine or psychiatry. Upon such differences specialities in social work are based, and from them grows the body of knowledge and experience that is incorporated into the training of workers".<sup>3</sup>

We realize then that it is the psychiatric setting which has something special to offer to the practice of psychiatric social work. What then is a psychiatric setting? The set up is concerned with the practice of psychiatry and mental hygiene; the purpose of the set up is the study, treatment, and rehabilitation of the mentally ill and the mentally defective, prevention of mental diseases, nervous disorders and mental defects and promotion of mental health.

Psychiatric social work in India should be the practice of social work and not just social case work (as found often in Western literature) in a psychiatric setting, for that is a narrow

<sup>3</sup>Lois Meredith, *French Psychiatric Social Work*, London: The Commonwealth Fund, 1940, p. 3.

view of social work. Case work is after all one method of social work. In the practice of psychiatric social work other methods, such as group work, community organization and research are also made use of. The emphasis on each method will depend much on the nature of the particular psychiatric setting in which a psychiatric social worker is going to practise.<sup>4</sup>

Some of the psychiatric agencies for adults are as follows:

- (a) mental hospitals for well established cases of insanity;
- (b) psychiatric wards for in-patients of the psychiatry department of a general hospital or other hospitals;
- (c) psychiatric out-patient clinics, (i) out-patient clinics in general hospitals; (ii) independent out-patient clinics or community mental health clinics; and (iii) psychiatric clinics or mental health clinics attached to persons, colleges and industries;
- (d) day hospitals, which besides being less expensive than mental hospitals or psychiatric beds in general hospitals, give the patient an opportunity to get adjusted to the family and the community while he is under treatment. Patients spend the whole day there and go back home only in the evening;
- (e) organizations for rehabilitation of mental patients;
- (f) institutions for adult mental defectives.

For children the following institutions are necessary: (a) child guidance clinics; (b) mental health services at (i) maternity clinics or some child welfare centres; (ii) pre-primary, primary, and secondary schools; (iii) juvenile centres; (iv) certified schools; (v) remand homes; (vi) institutions for dependent children, and

<sup>4</sup>For example, in working with the mentally ill adults or children with behaviour problems the social worker may practise group work with the multi-activity group, i.e., the patients who are held together by a common interest in activity. Members make contacts with one another as the needs arise to make suggestions, to criticise, to praise, to work together or to help one another. Through the help of the psychiatric social worker and through this group experience the patients learn social behaviour. She may also participate in group therapy with patients which calls for a high degree of skill and insight on the part of the worker. Its purpose is to reduce mental stress in disturbed children or adults by meeting their psychological needs on an individual basis. The final objective in this work is not to teach the members social behaviour but rather to eliminate the inner needs for hostile destructive acts. "It aims at discharge of emotion more than at achievement of external results."

(vii) institutions for mentally subnormal children. Psychiatric social work can very well be developed in these set ups.

**Essential functions for a psychiatric social worker are.—**

(1) To study case situations and complement the examination by the psychiatrist. The psychiatric social worker makes a thorough study of the environment of the patient, covering such aspects as home, work life and social life, and brings out significant facts which have some bearing on his maladjustment. This study enables her to prepare a systematic case history of the patient which throws light on the tension and difficulties in his life and also help her to assess the positive and negative aspects of the environment. The psychiatric social worker is able to throw light on the environmental factors that have contributed to the patient's problems. By interpreting the environment of the patient the psychiatric social worker helps the psychiatrist to understand the patient in his total setting and arrive at a satisfactory diagnosis so as to chalk out a line of treatment.

(2) To administer social treatment. This has a very wide range. The psychiatric social worker has very often to explain to the patient or the relatives what the problem is and what is involved in psychiatric treatment, so that their anxiety is allayed and they can co-operate in the treatment. The social worker has to help the relatives of the mentally defective or the insane, to accept the diagnosis and the psychiatric recommendations. The social worker aids the psychiatric treatment by the social treatment, i.e., treatment of environmental problems. She sees that there are no complications in the family, workplace of the patient or in other areas which can serve as obstacles in carrying out the psychiatric treatment. Often the nagging attitude of the members of the family, lack of proper understanding of the problem on the part of the employer or the school teacher (in the case of a child) or the sense of stigma regarding the illness on the part of the patient and his relatives can come in the way of successful treatment. The social worker works with the patient, his relatives and others, directly connected with him in modifying their attitudes. She also tries to bring about a better adjustment between the patient and his family.

In this connection, it is important to remember that the needs of a patient cannot be completely separated from those of his family; he cannot be expected to recover in a hospital if the needs of his dependents are not adequately met. So apart from helping the patient to adjust himself to the requirements of the treatment of his illness, the social worker also helps the family to adapt itself to the new situation. By working with the patient and his family the social worker lessens the patient's anxieties and enables him to complete his treatment without singing out against psychiatric advice.

Social treatment is also geared towards after care. Serious and difficult as are the problems of the person affected with psychosis or neurosis, there are still greater problems of after care. On his return home the patient may find himself a man apart if he continues to live as he lived in an institution. He has to adapt himself to the family. The social worker has to follow up a discharge case very carefully. Though mental illness can be recurrent, every attempt needs to be made in the direction of allaying the anxiety of the discharged patient for whom the danger and the fear of the illness hangs like the sword of Damocles and affects his personality. Besides, his ability to support himself and his family must be restored. Since the illness gives the patient a special position in society, the cure is not complete before the patient is re-adjusted socially and is enabled either to resume his old position or become reconciled to the new one. Therefore, the social worker very often has to assist a dischargée in securing a job better suited to his mental condition and also in adjusting himself to this new work. She has to pool together community resources like trusts and charities, employment exchanges, housing sections and recreation centres to help the patient.

(3) To enlist the co-operation of other social agencies for better discharge of functions of one's own agency and for stimulating interest in dealing with common problems effectively. By working co-operatively with various agencies, the psychiatric social worker is able to interpret her agency and its functions to the com-

munity so that the community can seek its aid in time and also give its timely assistance to the agency.

A psychiatric social worker needs to bear in mind that she should not get so deeply involved in intensive treatment of the maladjusted individual that she fails to recognize the importance of general social problems and, therefore, may not take interesting programmes for social change. She needs to study social conditions, develop resources in the community and participate in community planning.

The interdependence of psychiatric social service and community resources is such that unless all are of high quality, the service itself will be handicapped. If a particular community lacks facilities for various kinds of services to the emotionally disturbed child, the psychiatric social worker is prevented from helping the client adequately. In a community there may not be a play centre for children or special classes for exceptional children. The social worker may recognize these needs of children but will not be able to help them in the real sense of the word unless there are facilities for meeting their needs. Communities vary in the completeness of their welfare services and this fact does affect the adequacy of the service rendered by the social worker. Therefore, a psychiatric social worker has to become indirectly a community builder. She cannot keep her work strictly confined to any setting. She has to interpret the needs of the client to the community and make special efforts to arouse public interest in bringing about certain improvements..

(4) To participate in training programmes. Students of psychiatric social work, student nurses, medical students and staff of the agency where the psychiatric social worker is employed as a mental hygiene supervisor or consultant may participate in the training programmes.

As contributors to mental hygiene programme in educational institutions or other organizations, psychiatric social workers may or may not have always direct case work function with the clients of the agency, but they have the responsibility of helping the staff of the agency to increase and utilise more effectively knowledge of

emotional problems and their implications for physical and mental health, and social relationships.

(5) To impart mental health education. In pre-natal and post-natal clinics and nursery schools the psychiatric social worker apart from direct case work service to the clients, when necessary, imparts mental health education to parents. Sometimes her services are required to promote mental health education in the community. Her work may involve community organization, publicity, assisting in community surveys, studying mental hygiene needs of communities, development of facilities for more adequate provision for prevention and treatment of mental disease and so on.

(6) To participate in the determination and formation of agency policies with a view to socialising in agency set up to meet the needs of clients better.

(7) To maintain social work records. This is important for the purpose of social statistics. A full report enables a worker to diagnose the social problems better and check up her social treatment plan. This will also enable her to know whether she is going in the right direction or not. Social care itself is so complex a problem that various factors must be very carefully considered. The social worker must improve her skill constantly. She must be critical of what she does. Recording also helps her in acquiring the habit of observing and writing descriptions carefully.

(8) To promote research. The psychiatric social worker can be of immense assistance in the field of research. She enables the patient to accept psychiatric recommendations and encourages her to continue the treatment. Thus psychiatrists are in a position to observe the results of any particular treatment in which they are interested. When a patient does not respond to a certain type of treatment, the social worker can find out for the psychiatrist whether or not the deterrent is a social factor which needs handling before he is expected to respond. Such information would be of help in the verification of his reactions to a particular treatment.

The psychiatric social worker can render help in promoting social research too. She observes the social components of illness, behaviour disorders, etc., and finds out that the community re-

sources are inadequate and can throw much light on the deficiencies. She is able to determine what each case contributes to the knowledge and understanding of human beings and social forces. She observes what a particular case can have in common with other cases which can justify further study to determine the necessity for social measures. Case records of the agency provides ample data for social research. It is needless to add that social research leads to social action for promoting the cause of welfare of patients and their families.

(9) To promote therapeutic entertainment measures. The psychiatric social worker attached to hospitals has to entertain patients from time to time to keep them cheerful and help them to overcome their home sickness as well as the boredom of long treatment. She may organize a recreation club with the help of the members of the staff and the patients, and encourage the latter to develop hobbies. Such activities contribute much to the patients' recovery. Through organized recreational programmes the patients learn group participation, take up responsibility for their behaviour, learn discipline in a congenial atmosphere and also overcome their personality defects like shyness, withdrawn behaviour, negativism, etc. In child guidance clinics the therapeutic clubs organized for providing therapy through recreational activities serve good purpose. When the activities are organized one should keep in view the problems of its young members like shyness, aggressiveness, inability to mix in a group and so on. For instance, through dramatics and puppet shows the members are enabled to give vent to their repressed feelings in a socially acceptable manner. This indirectly helps them to find socially acceptable charm for the outlet of their surplus energy.

In the practice of psychiatric social work it is very essential to have team spirit among the members of the staff of the psychiatric agency. A good teamwork relationship, specially between the social worker and the psychiatrist is absolutely necessary. However, unfortunately both in the West as well as in India there have been occasions when a trained psychiatric social worker's role has not been properly understood. She has been regarded

as a person who explains to the families of the patients the psychiatrist's recommendations and finds jobs, boarding homes, schools and recreational centres. Often she has been regarded as an errand girl attached to a psychiatric clinic to carry out specific behests of the psychiatrist. But gone are the days of social manipulation in the field of professional social work. The social treatment that the psychiatric social worker offers has distinct techniques (social work techniques) of its own and her treatment is a part of a plan of total treatment. In the social treatment the psychiatric social worker deals with human attitudes and emotions as well as pools together resources of the community. She has case work techniques at her command for dealing with human emotions. Social case work is a form of psychotherapy as it deals with the treatment of mind. In other words, she handles people's feelings and emotions. It differs from psychotherapy of the psychiatrist in as much as his goal and techniques are different. It is essential that one profession should try to understand the contribution made by another. It does not conduce to teamwork where rigidity exists. It is disconcerting to find in a child guidance clinic that the child should be seen only by the psychiatrist and not by the social worker, and relatives by the social worker. Who should take up the major responsibility for the treatment of the child or his parents? Quite often the parents present a problem which needs the help of a psychiatrist. Sometimes the child would benefit by social work therapy, case work or therapeutic group work. Again, it is amazing to hear why a psychiatric social worker is not allowed to talk to a mental patient; yet she is expected to interpret his problems to the relatives, find him a job or bring about better adjustment on the part of the employer to the patient. The fear that if a social worker talks to the patient, the therapy value of the psychiatric treatment would be lost is unfounded. Quite often the patients bring out so many facts about themselves when they are interviewed in an unhurried atmosphere of goodwill by the social worker that the psychiatrists would benefit by them. There should be an understanding on the part of both the psychiatrist and the social worker about the areas of treatment of the patient.



It is not necessary that the psychiatrist should always tell the social worker about her area of work. The psychiatric social worker should also be able to state when a case is being discussed how she would be able to contribute towards the treatment.

An important point needs to be mentioned here that as there is a dearth of psychiatrists, the practising psychiatrist who has a social worker in his team utilises her service more for individualised work with the patient. This expert's intensive work is done from a psychological angle. In other words, the major emphasis is on the patient as an *individual* rather than as a *social being*. She is expected to carry out this work under the supervision of the psychiatrist. Some psychiatric social workers who do this type of work do not realize that they are overlooking the distinct contribution that a trained social worker can make to the field of social work. By training she is a social worker. She is taking up the type of work which a psychiatrist is expected to do. Neither by training is she a psychiatrist nor by her functions does she remain a social worker. There is a dearth of psychiatrists, similarly there is a dearth of trained psychiatric social workers in India. The professional training for each field is different. We do more harm than good to both the professions, for the social worker by doing the job which a psychiatrist with professional training should do remains an assistant to the psychiatrist. She is neither a psychiatrist nor a social worker doing justice to their respective professions. Efforts should be made by the professional organization of psychiatrists to encourage more people to go in for the training of psychiatrists and develop facilities for imparting such training.

In the treatment of a patient the psychiatrist is there to look at the patient (with major emphasis) as an individual. The social worker has a valuable contribution to make if she concentrates more on the environmental factors that create and affect emotions and attitudes without trying to be a pseudo-psychiatrist or psychoanalyst. Instead of attempting to do psychotherapy of the other type, a psychiatric social worker with due recognition of psycho-

logical factors needs to look into the environmental factors intensively. She should study the client as a person in his social content, find out what environmental factors (like culture or religious factors) hamper his happiness, what he and his community can do about these matters and how a social worker can help him. If we accept the fact that what a person is today is the result of all his yesterdays, then it logically follows that today's experience of social living will be a part of his psychic experience of tomorrow. Since a psychiatric social worker can have first hand or direct information of the social situations, she can be well equipped with her unique method of psychotherapy (case work therapy) through deeper understanding of the environmental factors as they affect the personality, and she can also utilise the knowledge of social situations in the social readjustment of the clients. Her therapy needs to be more and more in time socio-psychotherapy and not the psychotherapy of a psychiatrist.

From all that has been said above, it is evident that for psychiatric social work we need the services of well qualified social workers with specialization in the field of psychiatric social work. Any body just interested in this work will not do. Social work methods have a scientific basis. Methodical skill is essential for scientific social work. It is not simply intuition and common sense. The profession of social work today presupposes a scientific body of knowledge which should be acquired in an accredited school of social work before any individual is entitled to practise it. Very often it is thought that when one concentrates on the educational requirements one is apt to overlook necessary personal attributes of the workers. Our schools of social work do pay attention to personality factors in the selection of students and have been fairly successful in recruiting university graduates of both sexes who possess such qualities as warmth, sympathy and sensitive understanding that are regarded as necessary for the successful practice of the profession of social work. No person should be allowed to engage a psychiatric social worker—unless he or she has specialized in the field, has maturity of judgment and a definite interest in working with people with psychiatric problems. Aca-

demic preparation for this type of social work is extremely valuable. A good combination would be (1) an adequate background of general education; (2) possession of a B.A. degree, preferably in social science; (3) interest in sick people; (4) ability to overcome fear of and aversion for blood, diseased condition, queer behaviour, including physical violence, etc.; (5) special training in a school of social work in such subjects as philosophy and history of social work, Indian social problems, social legislation, medical information, public welfare and community welfare services, basic social work techniques, namely, case work, group work, community organization, social research, dynamics of human behaviour, adult and child psychiatry, including psychopathology, treatment of psychoses, various behaviour problems and management of the mentally defective; psychosomatic medicine, social and emotional components of illness, care and rehabilitation, case work in psychiatric settings, child guidance techniques; organization and administration of psychiatric social service in various settings and so on.

In training psychiatric social workers it is not desirable to limit their training programmes to the psychiatric field only. Some think that a psychiatric social worker under training should have field work experience only with patients. They, however, fail to see that such a procedure will make the worker's vision narrow. She is likely to see a patient in a disturbed state of mind only rather than as a person. Besides, a psychiatric case may have an organic disease, a social problem like unmarried motherhood and poor pecuniary condition. The worker who has no experience of varied human problems may attribute every aspect of the behaviour of the client to his mental condition, while it may be due to some other reason, physical, social or emotional. The field work programme should give the psychiatric social worker enough ground in working with healthy people as well as people suffering from various organic and mental diseases, and also familiarise herself with various community resources. Therefore, her first field work placement should be in a non-institutional setting, such as a family welfare agency where she can come to grips with per-

personality and family problems. It will be desirable to have a placement in a medical setting too, for many organic conditions lead to psychiatric problems. Besides, the student will learn to resolve the dichotomy of mind and body and try to grasp what happens to the whole man.<sup>5</sup> The student should have supervised field work experience in psychiatric settings both for children and adults, such as in a child guidance clinic, psychiatric out-patient clinic or a mental hospital.

Postgraduate professional training for psychiatric social work in India is imparted for the last 10 years only. It is surprising to learn that many persons object to the postgraduate training of social workers. They feel that a two-year training programme discourages many workers from joining the course when a large number of trained social workers are needed. However, every profession at one point or another in its development has to choose either between emphasis upon quantity or emphasis upon quality, and our country should regret to choose the former.

For erecting a house or building a bridge, we need the services of well qualified and trained engineers. It goes without saying that the training of social engineers who deal with human matter must have adequate training in a postgraduate institute, because they are engaged in promoting the social well-being of individuals, families and groups, and in restoring the victims of diseases and disasters to a useful life. One cannot be satisfied with a three or four month training programme for psychiatric social work. Adequate training cannot be imparted to students in a brief period. It is as absurd as giving a medical degree to a person after a short course of training and allowing him to practise as a physician because we are short of them.

In our country, we need the services of well qualified male and female psychiatric social workers. Their salary should be in accordance with the training required for the position and the responsibility to be shouldered by them. At present, the total emo-

<sup>5</sup>It is for this reason that the students of the Tata Institute of Social Sciences are required to specialize in Medical and Psychiatric social work as one field of specialization.

luments of a psychiatric social worker in a mental hospital or an out-patient psychiatric clinic rarely exceed Rs. 250/- a month. Besides, when she is required to visit the patients' homes or contact the employers, she pays the transport charges from her own pocket.

In spite of the fact that there is a great demand for psychiatric social workers, the employment agencies do not pay them handsomely. Consequently, very few candidates prefer to go in for this specialization in schools of social work. In most of the social work training institutions the largest number of students prefer to specialize in the labour welfare field which is much more paying. It is felt that schools of social work will make arrangements for training of psychiatric social workers, and more candidates will enrol for the training in the field if they feel that there is a demand for them on suitable terms. Adequate salary will attract workers of integrity. They will be imbued with the spirit of service, and the self-imposed responsibility will induce them to keep in touch with the new developments in this special field.

We may hope that the World Mental Health year 1960 will bring in better understanding of the role of the psychiatric social workers and adequate employment facilities for them in our country.

## CHAPTER

# 27

### *Urban Community Development in India*

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INDIA today is facing two powerful challenges: a fast rate of growth of population and an increasingly rapid rate of urbanisation. If these forces are allowed to continue unchecked, the country is likely to face an explosive situation. It has been estimated that the population of India might reach a billion by the year 2000 with one-third of the total crowding into urban areas.

Although India is predominantly a rural country, it can no longer be thought of merely as a "nation of villages" because the total impact of cities in India's economic, political and cultural structure is much greater than the total urban population would indicate.

Accelerated pace of urbanisation in India during the preceding decade has complicated already existing sub-standard level of life and living in large portions of its cities. Only some 14 per cent of people lived in cities in 1941 while this figure for 1951 was 17.3 per cent. During this period total population of the country increased by 13.3 per cent and urban growth was nearly three times, namely, 34.8 per cent. It is estimated to be about 21 per cent by the year 1961. In 1951 there were 77 cities with a population of more than one lakh and Hoslitz estimates that there will be 100 more such cities in 1961. Urban growth has been particularly great in the five largest cities with over a million population while in 1951 there were five such cities. In twenty years, the ten largest cities in India have doubled in population. In some cases the growth has been

phenomenal, such as Delhi which had a population of 2,32,837 in 1911, today stands at over two million.

**Implications.**—Since independence substantial attention has been paid to the rural community development programme, but this has not in any way either arrested the migration of people to the cities or made great impact on the life and living conditions of majority of people in the cities many of whom are rural migrants. Consequently, urban living conditions have considerably deteriorated on account of congestion and over-crowding. Uncontrolled movements of population and indiscriminate location of factories and other business establishments have contributed to the growth of slums, resulting in great hazards to the health and well-being of the community. Civic amenities, such as drinking water, provision of latrines, conservancy services, drainage, sewage, etc., could not keep pace with the growing demands. In addition to this, there are no adequate facilities for community life, healthy recreational and cultural activities. Naturally, such environments have become breeding grounds for diseases, quarrels and tensions between the families and the groups. They also contribute to social disorganization on a large scale, giving rise to social problems, such as crime, delinquency, prostitution, etc.

**Indian Slums.**—The Sen Committee has estimated slum population as ranging from 7 to 60 per cent of the total in large Indian cities. A slum has been defined as “an area in which the residential buildings are, by reason of disrepair or sanitary defects, unfit for human habitation, or which, by reason of their bad arrangement or the narrowness and bad arrangement of the streets, are dangerous or injurious to the health of the inhabitants of the area.”

Some relevant data based on the recent survey of slums of Old Delhi given below, substantiate poor conditions of living in some of the slum areas:

In Delhi 40,500 families or over 2.2 lakhs of persons live in *katras* and *basties* considered to be unfit for human habitation, on account of congestion, dilapidation, lack of amenities, etc.

More than nine-tenths of *katras* have outlived their normal

span of life; half of them need reconstruction and the other half are in need of major repairs.

60 per cent of the *katras* lack ventilation entirely and in another 30 per cent it is inadequate.

20 per cent of the *katras* have no facilities for drainage and another 45 per cent have inadequate drains.

34 per cent of the *katras* depend on sources of water outside the *katras*.

The number of families per common tap is eight (or 40 persons). In case of *basties*, the number of families per common tap is 134. Thirty-three per cent of the population living in the *katras* do not have these facilities of latrines.

The number of families using a seat is four (or 20 persons). Of the latrines existing in the *katras*, only about 12 per cent are water-borne.

Eighteen out of 61 *basties* surveyed do not have latrines.

The number of families who share latrines comes to 13 per cent or 65 persons.

**Slum Clearance versus Slum Improvement.**—Although the economic development currently launched and the determined support given to family planning are likely to raise gradually the living conditions in the coming years, it is doubtful how far the benefits of development programmes are likely to reach all sections of the population. From this point of view, steps should be taken to prevent further deterioration in some of the vulnerable areas such as slums. Measures designed to eradicate slums and the rehabilitation and provision of better housing for millions of the city and town dwellers are only long term approaches to the problem. Such goals cannot be achieved in the near future. The task is gigantic and the cost enormous which the country cannot afford at present.

Against this background, it is necessary to take some interim measure to bring about improvements in the depressed parts of the urban areas without much dislocation or cost. A programme of this type to be successful should be a people's programme with their active involvement at all stages.



**Urban Community Development.**—Urban Community Development suggests a practical method to tackle many of the problems of urbanisation through motivating people to organized action on a self-help basis. It also aims to promote neighbourly feelings and social responsibilities and co-operation. Changes in the lives of the people are being brought about within the present framework and the resources now available, through people's own initiative and consent. Changes that could be brought about in the improvement of drains, water facilities, latrines are limited or there can be changes in their relationship and general outlook. Anti-social behaviour met with often in cities and towns is likely to be corrected through the process of organized group opinion. It is common knowledge that although individuals may keep their houses clean, they do not hesitate to throw refuse, garbage and filth in the adjoining lanes or alleys, or allow their children to defecate in the drains, or damage public property.

The programme of urban community development has for its base the *people* who have a direct role in the physical and social changes which affect and concern their immediate life. This is opposed to the conventional approach to the community centres operated for a large population wherein the social worker from other areas go and try to do certain things for the people. Naturally, the desired results could not be attained without the involvement of the people as experience has shown. Since urban community development attempts to enthuse people in as many self-help projects as possible through their association it is likely to produce lasting results. This is the best approach in engineering social change in local areas, as it develops community feeling and shared objectives among urban people.

The word, development implies the elements of self-help and citizen participation in the growth of community spirit and community activities. The United Nations defines community development as:

the processes by which the efforts of the people themselves are united with those of governmental authorities to improve the economic, social and cultural conditions of communities, to integrate these communities into the life of the nation and to enable them to contribute

fully to national progress. This complex of processes is then made up of two essential elements: the participation by the people themselves in efforts to improve their level of living with as much reliance as possible on their own initiative; and the provision of technical and other services in ways which encourage initiative, self-help and mutual help and make these more effective. It is expressed in programmes designed to achieve a wide variety of specific improvements.

Urban community development is based on the following assumptions and beliefs:

1. Social change can be most effectively brought about in geographic areas where people live, that is in the lanes and *katras*. Such social change can best be brought about by working with groups of people where they live rather than by working with individuals.
2. Slum life is largely a product of group practices, and thus any change must come from the group. A desire on the part of people for change must precede any successful development programme and permanent changes will come only as a local community sees the need for the change and as it develops the capacity for making such changes as a group.
3. People who live under squalid slum conditions do not necessarily accept the situation as natural and inevitable. They actually can, and will, change once they recognize their needs.
4. Changes which are sought in a local urban community, and self-imposed, have more meaning and performance than changes imposed from without, regardless of how well-intentioned they may be.
5. People in urban communities need assistance in recognizing their needs and in organizing themselves in such a way as to achieve desired objectives.

Urban community development work attempts to develop local community feeling so as to make citizens aware of their civic needs and responsibilities. Planning and action in local areas are stimulated through maximum citizen group participation and minimum professional leadership. The programme is limited only to those areas and problems where there is the possibility of self-help. How-

ever, it must be cautioned that urban community development is no substitute for government action in making profound changes in economic opportunities, housing, and other amenities of urban people.

In order to experiment with the objectives, method of approach, contents of programme, personnel requirements, etc., of the urban community development, the pilot project was started in the Delhi Municipal Corporation with the help of The Ford Foundation. The project involves six types of improvements:

1. The organization of the first six Citizens' Development Councils or *vikas mandals*. (Field work began in one project in February, 1959 and a year later *vikas mandals* were established in all the six areas);
2. The establishment of 20 *vikas mandals* in two large neighbourhoods;
3. Improvement of the typical poor sanitary conditions and general disorder in the local bazaar through community organization;
4. An attempt to improve the work of the local voluntary group, called *mohalla* committees;
5. The development of health and welfare council and community chest to co-ordinate the welfare services in Delhi and integrate them with the citizen development councils and
6. Various civic campaigns to improve the physical appearance and conditions of the city.

**Goals and Objectives.**—The goal of the Delhi pilot project has been to promote the growth of community life and to encourage the development of citizen participation in programmes of self-help and civic improvement. The objectives are:

1. The *social integration* of the communities on a local neighbourhood basis through participation in *self-help* and mutual aid programmes.
2. Development of a sense of *civic pride* by stimulating local interest in civic betterment campaigns.

3. Preparation of the ground for *democratic decentralisation* of municipal services by the organization of *vikas mandals* or People's Development Councils with local leadership.
4. Creation of the necessary climate for undertaking programmes of *economic betterment* based on the maximum use of community resources and local initiative.

**The Pilot Project.**—The first six pilot project areas in Delhi were selected out of thirty possible areas studied. The average size of a *vikas mandal* was approximately 250 families or about 1,250 persons, although in a few areas the number of families was as high as 450. A larger area was rejected on the basis of its being ineffective for the development of meaningful relations among people.

In spite of the fact the area of each unit is geographically contiguous, it is somewhat an artificial unit. Each project has a distinctive population composition and physical condition, both factors which might help or hinder community organization. Each project also varies in caste, religion, occupation and length of residence. It is hoped that working in such varied situations would give valuable experience and serve to testify the soundness of approach.

**Organization of Vikas Mandals.**—The organizers are considered to be the key to the self-help projects, and for this reason they have been carefully chosen on the basis of their education, experience and personality. They remain generally in the background and do not take any credit for any of the accomplishments of the *vikas mandals*.

In organizing an area the organizers follow a set of procedures. First, they study the area carefully, noting such features as temples, schools, playgrounds, centres, etc., the population composition according to caste, occupation, and religion and the general physical condition of the area. Thereafter, they call on each resident, by paying door to door visits, discovering the problems of the local areas and getting the people to think about self-help. Six basic questions are asked:

1. What are the problems in the local area which you think the people here might be able to do something about?
2. How long have the problems existed?
3. Would you like to do something about the problems of the area?
4. Have you had any experience in some mutual aid, co-operative welfare or voluntary organization?
5. To whom do you turn in the area when a crisis arises?
6. Would you be interested in attending a group meeting of persons in the area to discuss neighbourhood problems?

In the process of interviewing they attempt to locate natural leaders, who might be relied upon to lead the group and stimulate them in their self-help activities. These people who are resourceful and articulate are considered to be anxious to improve environmental conditions and their judgment is highly respected by other local residents.

After this initial survey and interviewing period, the areas are divided into zones or sub-zones, and meetings are called of the families in those small areas, about fifteen to twenty-five to discuss common local problems and elect a representative to the *vikas mandal* council. After all of the sub-block meetings have been held, a general meeting of the council, which consists of ten to fifteen representatives, is held to nominate officers, who are then voted upon at a meeting of all the residents of the area. The office bearers are president, vice-president, secretary and treasurer. A model constitution is also adopted at this general meeting, and committees are appointed. Regular meetings of the council are then held, and citizen discussion groups are organized at the sub-block level. Finally, the council assumes the responsibility, through its officers and committees, of carrying out the specific action programmes of each community.

**Membership of Vikas Mandals.**—The constitution of the *vikas mandal* provides for two types of members; contributory members and non-contributory members. The former enjoy the right of voting and contesting for offices. Generally, the membership is one rupee a year. The number of persons in the area enrolling

themselves as contributory members by paying an annual subscription of one rupee is an indication of their active interest in the organization established for their own betterment. From this point of view, the progress so far can be said to be satisfactory. Assuming the number of contributory members to be one from each family, the percentage of families becoming contributory members for all the six pilot projects comes to 78 per cent. In respect of the three pilot projects, the percentage figure is much higher than the overall average. One project is very outstanding where the percentage figure is as high as 148 indicating that on an average 1.5 adult members from each family have become members. In the case of the *vikas mandals* which are about three months old, the percentage figures show wide variations in respect of individual *vikas mandals*. For the neighbourhood as a whole, the glaring figures are 33 and 58 per cent respectively. It has been observed that the contributory membership shows a tendency to increase with the successful working of *vikas mandals* over a period of time.

**Self-Help Activities of Vikas Mandals.**—The *vikas mandals* have been able to organize a number of activities on a self-help basis. The total number of activities undertaken in all the first six pilot projects comes to 197. Four out of the six pilot projects which have completed about a year of operation have undertaken more than 30 activities each. In respect of new *vikas mandals* in the neighbourhood areas, the total number of activities are found to be 130 and 108 respectively. The difference noticed between the two neighbourhoods can be partly attributed to the variation in size and number of *vikas mandals* organized. As they have been recently formed, the number of activities cannot be expected to be high. Despite this good progress has been made by many newly formed *vikas mandals*. Three of them report more than 10 to 20 activities.

There is no set pattern to the activities initiated in the various *vikas mandals*. They are being developed purely on the basis of the needs felt by the community in fields, such as physical improvements and amenities, health, education, recreation and

crafts. The first six *vikas mandals* which have been operating for about a year have launched about 200 self-help activities till May, 1960. It is observed that over 25 per cent of the activities are in the field of education and recreation. Physical improvements and amenities are next in importance and they account for 49 self-help projects. A large number of projects have also been undertaken in the field of health and sanitation.

**Educational Aid.**—Some financial grants have been made in the form of educational aids for some projects in order to stimulate co-operative effort in local areas and to demonstrate what can be accomplished through pooling modest resources. In many projects no subsidy has been given. Grants generally range from 10 to 50 per cent of the expenditure. These subsidies have also made it possible for citizens to undertake larger projects than would otherwise have been possible. If fifteen women in one area desire to learn tailoring, they are given some assistance to buy a sewing machine, provided one agrees to teach at least another person. They each pay one rupee a month for six months and contribute upto Rs. 100/- towards the cost of the machine. The machine then belongs to the *vikas mandal* and can be rented again to other women. Since the machines are owned by the group they are well cared for. Subsequently, machines are purchased by other groups co-operatively by instalments.

**Neighbourhood Councils.**—After the experience of successfully organizing *vikas mandals* on a pilot basis, the next step is to have an organization over a larger area corresponding to a neighbourhood. Two pilot *vikas mandals* have been extended into neighbourhood areas. One neighbourhood has 20,000 persons and the other 7,500 persons. A third neighbourhood council is likely to be started shortly. In the development stage the neighbourhood council is expected to be a loose confederation and may be called *kshetra panchayat* (area council). Also included in the council will be representatives of established mohalla committees and welfare organizations and institutions functioning in the area and municipal government employees.

A major objective of these neighbourhood councils is the decentralisation of municipal services, so that they can become more effective. Such matters as handling sweepers, common use of limited open spaces, or establishment of a library, and improvement of a dispensary can be handled by a neighbourhood council. Also in overcrowded areas such problems as unauthorised industrial or commercial establishments, dairy and cattle nuisance, and anti-social problems like illicit liquor drinking, prostitution, and juvenile delinquency can more effectively yield to the organized forces of the larger neighbourhood.

The co-ordination between the *vikas mandals* is in charge of two neighbourhood organizers who, in turn, are responsible to one of the two chief community organizers.

**Bazaar Project.**—Since bazaars form an integral part of a neighbourhood, it would be unfortunate to deal with neighbourhood conditions, neglecting the unsightly and insanitary conditions of most of the bazaars. Their conditions may be attributed to many factors, such as overcrowding and extensive encroachments, but chaotic conditions are created by lack of organization. If shopkeepers and the public co-operated even to a limited extent many bazaars could be transformed into better shopping centres. Whereas the initial appeal is expected to be largely in economic terms, namely that profits could be increased, it is hoped that improvements will foster a feeling of local pride and realization of the necessity for better sanitation measures.

A typical bazaar, namely, Sitaram Bazaar, with 300 shops has been selected as a pilot project and two organizers were assigned, in February, 1960 to the project for developing a local organization which, through self-help, rather than governmental or police action, could make improvement in the area.

Although the project is new, the response has been encouraging, particularly in the attitude of the shopkeepers towards mutual co-operation and their own recognition that a bazaar often represents a situation of "antagonistic symbiosis". The appearance of the area could be vastly improved by whitewashing or painting the shops, substituting signs of standard height and length, and



by learning together how to display goods more attractively. They are also thinking of a large guide map to show where each type of store is located. They pay their electric and water bills in a co-operative manner to save time, and it is possible that they might employ a common legal consultant to tackle their legal problems at less cost. The advantage of group advertising might also be demonstrated.

**Mohalla Committees.**—A review of the mohalla committees in Delhi city indicate a diversity in their structure, functions and financial resources and programme content. Efforts are now being made by the departments to vitalise them in a systematic way as it may prove helpful to the urban community development work.

The basic problem today of the mohalla committees is the lack of properly oriented workers who have the ability to pool community resources to meet their needs. They also lack experience in organization and administration of public institutions.

A meeting of the representatives of the mohalla committees, which was called a few months back to discuss matters of common interests, was attended by 21 representatives from 11 mohalla committees encompassing a population of about six lakhs. It was agreed that joint meetings be conducted to learn from each other through newsletters issued from time to time to keep in touch with these bodies and in general to guide them in their work. Accordingly, the department had organized in June, 1960 a training programme for the workers of mohalla committees. A newsletter known as *vikas vani* is also published to serve as a medium of communication among these bodies. It is also proposed to hold inter-mohalla committee meetings periodically and to depute workers from the department to the executive committee meetings of these mohalla committees on request so as to offer them advice and guidance.

**Civic Campaigns.**—Civic contests and 'Keep Delhi Clean' campaigns are also being organized. Essay, slogan, and poster contests for the various age groups on civic themes create an awareness of their civic problems and stimulate emotional attachment to the city, its glory and beauty. It is hoped that these

campaigns, using mass media of communication, will bring about a climate propitious for urban community development.

It has also been proposed that a city welfare council be promoted to co-ordinate health and welfare services to meet needs in the city and also make it possible for citizen self-help projects to secure encouragement from other agencies. Such a council might undertake the following type of activities: (1) co-ordination of welfare activities; (2) co-operate in fund raising; (3) research on community needs and services; (4) joint community action where needed; (5) provision of common services whenever needed and (6) development of public understanding of social problems.

An Advisory Council on urban community development appointed by the Mayor has been set up consisting of representatives of the municipal government and a number of social agencies in the city. As soon as neighbourhood councils have been formed their representatives will also be included in this council. The Advisory Council is an *ad hoc* body.

It seems likely that the general pattern evolved in Delhi can provide a framework for other Indian cities, with modifications to suit local variations, since it has been tried in areas of different types. The project goals and objectives, for example, have generally been supported by the National Seminar on Urban Community Development organized by the Indian Conference of Social Work in Hyderabad in December 1959. A keen interest in the programme was evinced. Representatives of the Planning Commission, Ministries of Central Government, State Governments, Municipal Corporations, Municipalities, international organizations, and experts connected with some aspect of the programme or other, and schools of social work, representatives of the national organizations and social workers participated in it.

The main object of the seminar was to focus the attention on the need of urban community development and bring to bear on this problem expert opinion on the various aspects of the programme. The following were some of the main recommendations:

1. That there should be a balance between rural and urban planning under a well conceived Master Plan and that

social development should closely follow physical development. A plea was also made for the early enactment of a comprehensive legislation so as to give adequate powers to municipal authorities to implement the schemes.

2. Amenities such as the following were recognized 'as essential for healthy, safe, satisfying and comfortable living:

(i) protected water supply, (ii) drains and sewers or hygienic latrines; (iii) adequate conservancy; (iv) adequate road system, properly surfaced and preferably dust-proof with proper street lighting.

3. An Advisory Council at the neighbourhood and city levels should be set up for purposes of successful operation of the programme.

4. The idea of a pilot project was commended and a period of five years was favoured.

5. There should be a separate department in the Corporation or the Municipality to plan, execute and supervise the programme.

6. The need for training of personnel before launching the projects was felt desirable.

7. Three different sizes of projects have been recommended in order to assess viability and economic aspect of the projects:

(i) 500 to 1,000 households.

(ii) 1,100 to 2,000 households.

(iii) 2,100 to 4,000 households.

8. The need for provision of a convenient place for multi-purpose community centre was emphasised.

**Unit in the Corporation.**—It is true, that there are a few agencies and groups working in urban areas but their objectives, activities, membership and influence are found to be extremely limited. Hence they could not be developed as the sole agency for programme implementation of the type envisaged. They do not have either the organizational capacity or the type of experience required.

It is obvious that urban community development of the pattern envisaged has to be through the agency of the Municipal Corporation or committees. This arrangement has also been recommended by the Hyderabad Seminar on Urban Community Development. The separate department will plan, execute and supervise the programme of urban community development. Its relationship with other departments will have to be defined so that necessary co-operation may be forthcoming from all of them.

**Unit at the National Level.**—The need for some machinery at the central level to effect over-all direction and co-ordination between the cities operating the programme cannot be disputed. However, its structure and location in the existing administrative unit may present some difficulties. As at present the subjects concerning the Corporation and the activities, such as Town Planning, Housing, Public Health, Education and Social Welfare are being dealt with by different ministries. If the programme of urban community development is to succeed, it should have the unstinted support of all the ministries concerned. Perhaps the establishment of a separate autonomous body like the Central Social Welfare Board may solve all the problems instead of charging one Central Ministry with the responsibilities of urban community development.

Although the period of experimentation has been short, results have been encouraging and considerable experience has also been gained. Although the slum dwellers are illiterate, they possess commonsense, shrewdness and ability to tackle their problems with some external assistance. Even though poor, they are not happy to live in filthy surroundings and feel the great contrasts which co-exist in cities.

In all our projects we encountered initial hostility and suspicion as the workers were identified with some kind of election workers. The people seemed to have developed deep-rooted suspicion of anyone talking of their betterment. This hostility can be overcome by two or three weeks' sustained efforts. About the organizational potential we found that the density of population, existence of unattended problems, limited mobility of the people

and homogeneous nature of the community promote organization, while diversity in the composition of the community in terms of caste, class, linguistic or other groupings hampers organization. Organization of the people on a regional basis seems to be an effective way of changing narrow caste and regional loyalties.

We have also been pleasantly surprised to note that women are more highly motivated for self-improvement. They appear to respond more easily and readily than men. Women have to spend most of their time in the filthy surroundings and they are, therefore, naturally more concerned with the improvement in the area. Moreover, since they have not come into direct contact with organizations and agencies which talked of betterment and did nothing they are less distrustful. They also carry the brunt of social change.

A crucial task has been the stimulation and development of a community feeling among the people who merely live in an area without feeling any ties or pride in their surroundings. The development of such a feeling of pride and civic sense required much ingenious planning. The very fact that the council members meet together to deliberate on their common problems gives them a sense of importance and local pride. Such a feeling is further enhanced through devices like making sub-block name plates for each council representative to have in front of him at the council meetings, having letter-heads with the names of the office bearers, receipt books for payment of annual membership fees of one rupee per individual member, milk distribution cards, and the use of zone number demarcating the project area. All project areas have a small *vikas mandal* office with the name of the organization painted on the door.

Visits between *vikas mandal* representatives have also been arranged by the department, and this has tended to foster a sense of healthy competition, pride and loyalty in one's own area. Such inter-project contact has proved to be an effective technique which has often led to the exchange of gifts between people from one area to representatives of other areas. Other joint *inter-vikas mandal* projects, such as common picnics or sight-seeing programmes have strengthened friendly ties among the local communities. Finally,

meetings have been arranged at which the office bearers of all the projects discuss their common problems. This gives them a feeling of importance in their joint efforts.

It has been suggested that economic improvement should be the core of urban community development programme. However, diversity of occupation and the vast problem of urban unemployment make these programmes difficult to tackle at the local levels. All the same, some economic improvement can also be achieved indirectly through co-operative purchasing of food, wise planning of nutritious diets, wise planning of household budget, etc. In the initial stages, therefore, it will be advisable to limit the scope of urban community development programmes to those areas only which can create a better climate for economic improvement.

The experience gained so far in the Delhi project suggests that city people, even of the humblest strata, have the will and capacity to improve their own life and living conditions provided they are properly motivated and guided. People being the greatest resource of the present day India, urban community development will succeed to the extent "millions of hands" are mobilised to bring about small improvements in the quality of urban life on a self-help basis. This will ultimately lead to the creation of a social organism out of social agglomeration and act as a wise counter-vailing force to the growing tide of urbanisation.



## Part Four

### **CULTURAL FACTORS AND THEIR BEARINGS ON THE PRACTICE OF PROFESSIONAL SOCIAL WORK**





## CHAPTER

# 28

### *Practice of Social Work:*

#### **From the angle of Case Worker**

(Miss) G. R. BANERJEE, D.Phil.

A CLOSE study of human behaviour reveals that from very ancient times man's living together has been characterised by a spirit of mutual aid, aggression and a craving for possession. Without the spirit of mutual assistance families or tribes could not have come into existence and held their members together. In India, as in other countries too, the urge for social service which had its roots in man's elemental nature found its expression in many social and religious institutions. The stronger force of religion in our country channeled this urge into an expression of religious obligation. In his relation to the rest of society, the individual, according to the Indian scheme, lays stress upon his duties, his *dharma* by which he is to secure his own advancement. The path of duty lies through the discharge of debts which a person owes to his fellow-men, to his forefathers and to all sentient beings. At his very birth an individual is born charged with liabilities. "Whoever exists, he in being born is born as owing a debt to the Gods, to the *rishis*, to the forefathers and to men."<sup>1</sup> This sense of debt seems to be working in the Indian mind at all stages of the evolution of Indian civilization. "When a man has paid the three debts, let him apply his mind to the attainment of final liberation; he who seeks it without having paid the debts sinks downwards," thus declares Manu.<sup>2</sup> The appreciation of the debts and the duties

<sup>1</sup>Taithiriva Brahamana, VI, 3. 10. 5. Satapatha Brahamana, I. 7. 2. 1.

<sup>2</sup>Manusmrith, VI, 35.

which he has to discharge to his fellow-men has a powerful hold on the Indian mind.

Increase in human needs and complexities of social life compelled mankind to hunt for new ways of rendering help to the needy people. The recognition of man's responsibility to his fellow-men led humanitarian workers to try to help people by providing better opportunities to them in the form of asylums, schools and hospitals. This gradually led to the development of the occupation of social service. But it is only during the last century that the need to develop this occupation of social service on a professional level, based on scientific knowledge, has been realized.

Sir Dorabji Tata Graduate School of Social Work was established in Bombay in 1936. It was the first institution to provide professional training in the field of social service. The trend towards the development of social work as a profession continues. One of the basic requirements of a profession is that a body of knowledge should be built. The skills of the practitioners rest upon such knowledge. At present, we are utilising mostly the body of knowledge developed in the U.S.A. The methods of social work like case work, group work and community organization and their principles have been made use of in India for over a decade, and it is high time that we tried to see how far the cultural differences call for adaptations of the basic processes. It is also necessary to find out whether Indian Culture<sup>3</sup> has something specific to offer to the practice of case work in general.

The practice of case work calls for respect for the client in the true sense of the word. Even when the case worker comes to know about the dark side of his life he has to accept him as he is, irrespective of his shortcomings. If he looks down upon the client or shows superficial respect to him he will feel it.

Since very ancient times in India the Vedantic doctrine of the identity of man with God had established the fundamental

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<sup>3</sup>By Culture, Murphy means "the complex whole that includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by a man as a member of society." Gardner Murphy. *Personality: A Biosocial Approach to Origins and Structure*, New York: Harper and Bros. 1947, p. 983.

equality of man on a secure basis. Since the thirteenth century Islam has also emphasised this equality. The Vaishnava reformers too, laid a great stress on this idea. The concept of Nara Narayan and Dariadra Narayan are the glaring instances of the same, i.e., the poor and the miserable are also the parts of the Divinity and deserve respect. In short, Hindu religion and philosophy have always preached respect for the individual.

Closely connected with the idea of respect for the individual is the worker's faith that human beings on the whole have a capacity for change, and if properly guided, can bring about the change for their betterment. Indians have a deep faith that the human mind is not static but dynamic. Indian literature presents many examples where persons have changed over completely from one way of thinking to another. Valmiky who was a robber could become a saint. King Asoka who was notorious for his cruelty could become a Buddhist monk and renounce the world.

Indians have been so much guided by obedience to adult authority that they cannot take up the responsibility of determining their own line of action in a case. Let us take the case of Sheila in this context. She was a young woman of twenty-five, suffering from palpitation of the heart. She had spells of giddiness, and was diagnosed as a case of hysteria. In the course of treatment by the psychiatrist she got an insight into her problem. Her mother-in-law was a dominating type of person who expected her to carry out her dictates. Sheila was not much accustomed to doing household chores before her marriage, and as a result, tried to avoid them. The mother-in-law expected that she could do most of the household work. She did not like the idea of Sheila going out for a walk with her husband, instead of staying at home and doing the household work. Since the mother began to show resentment, the son avoided taking Sheila out frequently. This made matters worse and Sheila had more frequent spells of giddiness. Sheila realized during her treatment that her spells provided her with an opportunity to escape from an unpleasant situation. During the spells the mother-in-law did not give her work. On the other hand, she could not

openly defy her mother-in-law for fear of social consequences nor could she do the amount of work expected of her.

The psychiatrist wanted to talk things over with the mother-in-law but she refused to come to the psychiatry department. He talked to the husband to set up a separate establishment where he could live with his wife or else he could tell his mother not to interfere in Sheila's affairs. She refused to agree to the proposal of setting up a home for her son and his wife; nor could he hurt his mother's feelings by telling her not to interfere in Sheila's affairs. He knew that his mother was a sensitive person and would feel hurt if he were to tell her. He did not think that it was proper for the psychiatrist to tell his mother to mend her ways. He felt that Sheila was a much younger person and could learn to put up with her mother-in-law. He himself wanted to guide her in the matter. He was fond of Sheila but could not hurt his mother's feelings. He felt that if Sheila could not make adjustments, then things should continue as they were—till the lifetime of his mother.

The social worker at this stage took up the case and visited the home of the patient. She had interviews with the mother-in-law in the course of which she realized that the mother-in-law was not a hard-hearted person but did not want her only daughter-in-law to be a fashionable lady. She believed that when women did not take interest in household work, they thought of becoming fashionable ladies. She was fond of Sheila but the latter was unable to realize this fact. The worker praised her for her concern for her only daughter-in-law. She hinted that society had undergone a lot of change in recent years and it was difficult to say whether it was good or bad for the society. The old lady felt that young men indulge too much in entertaining their wives. The worker dwelt on the fact that it would be very awkward for her son to go out alone in the society where other men bring their wives. She asked her whether there was not a likely possibility for her son to accompany other women. If he did not get the opportunity of going out with his wife, he might associate with other undesirable contacts and ruin his happy home. The old woman felt uneasy about the situation. After a few interviews she expressed the opinion that it

would be all right if Sheila went out with her husband occasionally. The worker then pointed out that Sheila was a bit slow in her work and it might not be possible for her to go out occasionally after finishing all the work. The mother-in-law consented that on the day Sheila went out she would not be expected to do all the work and that she would help her in household chores. The worker found out that if Sheila went out frequently, the mother-in-law felt lonesome, and reacted badly towards the daughter-in-law. The worker in the course of subsequent interviews tried to find out from the mother-in-law what sort of outings she herself enjoyed. She found out that the old lady enjoyed going to a temple nearby for observing *Arati* ceremony and to hear some holy recitals. She needed somebody to accompany her. For a few days the worker accompanied her. A few days later it was found out that another lady who visited the temple regularly lived near Sheila's house. The worker became friendly with her and introduced her to the mother-in-law of Sheila. Later they became good friends and started going to the temple together. As the mother-in-law began to realize that it was important for Sheila to hold her husband's interest, she gradually permitted her to go out more often with her son and consequently, gave her less work. Since the mother-in-law no longer felt lonesome in the evenings she did not want to detain her daughter-in-law at home. Thus, gradually the mother-in-law and the daughter-in-law came close to each other, and they did the household work together. As Sheila became more at ease with her mother-in-law, her symptoms disappeared. She expressed to the worker that she was lucky to have a mother-in-law who was so loving and considerate. She did not want to be away from her.

This case would have been successfully dealt with in a different culture in a different way. In the West more efforts perhaps would have been put in to build up the personality of the client to stand up against the demands of her mother-in-law or to work with the husband to persuade him to establish a separate home. In the West the son's consideration for the mother would have been taken perhaps as 'mother fixation'. In the cultural setting found in India, overlooking the needs of the mother will not be

regarded as growth. If the husband had taken sides only with the wife and abandoned his mother, he might have solved the wife's problem, but created a serious problem for the mother who in Indian culture is supposed to be cared for by her sons in her old age. The husband also could not have been happy because he would have felt that he had failed in his duty towards his mother.

It is to be remembered that an average Indian stays closer and with greater intimacy with his family and his community than a Westerner. "Ruth Benedict calls more intensive group participation the core of the oriental psyche. She makes the appropriate distinction between Eastern shame cultures and Western guilt cultures. Shame and guilt are different feelings. Shame or losing face or feeling humiliated, is man's reaction to criticism of (and minimization among) one's own family and peers. The individual in the shame culture is and remains much more than the Westerner—a participating member bound to his original social group. His group prescribes how he must restrain himself and what quality of character he should suppress in order to be more acceptable to other members. Social conformation is their aim. An individual can be rejected by his group or ridiculed or he may even imagine that he made himself ridiculous. The point is that he virtually never steps out of the compact group relation, the family, the clan, the nation".<sup>4</sup> "His need for discretion and reserve for self-distinction, privacy and inner security is not so extremely developed as that of the Westerner. Living in tune and harmony with his actual world is a true oriental ideal".<sup>5</sup>

Sheila was a submissive person and could not make decisions for herself. Her husband also could not decide what he should do. We cannot generalise that Indian clients have no self-determination. They determine their course of action which will not be very far from conformity with Indian culture.

As members of the family and the community are closely

<sup>4</sup>Joost A. M. Meerloo, "Psychological Remarks on the East-West Controversy", *Mental Hygiene*, XLIV, 1, (January, 1960), pp. 30-42.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 39.

interdependent in India, it is but natural that relationships have to be taken into consideration before any solution is sought. It requires greater strength of character on the part of the client who is closely tied to his environment to find a solution to his problem.

It should, however, be mentioned that the capacity to make decisions varies from client to client in any culture, and a case worker should judge the client's mental and physical capacity to act for himself. She should not force him to take a decision beyond his capacity.

In the context of self-determination it may be mentioned that in no country the freedom to choose and decide one's course of action is absolute. A client's freedom is not meant to promote rampant individualism. An individual's rights are circumscribed by the rights of others. In the area of social and moral evil a client may have an inclination and physical capacity for such a choice, (e.g., killing a person one hates) but the case worker will try to help the client to avoid such a decision. The measures adopted for avoiding the decision may be many, depending upon the personality and ability of the worker, personality of the client, situation and the culture to which the client and the worker belong. It may mean interpretation of the problem; by giving advice one may go to the extent of taking up an authoritative approach.

Thus, client's self-determination within the cultural pattern is possible in the West as well as in India.

In the practice of case work it is a well-known fact that if a client has to have an orientation in new ideas and ideologies and is to be given interpretation of his problem in a case situation, the whole thing has to fit into his learning pattern. Dependence on adult guidance and faith in the advice of people with more experience of life has been emphasised in every phase of an individual's life in India. It is no wonder that when an Indian client seeks the help of a case worker, he wants substantial guidance. He has been used to learning new things from adults through advice. He leans upon the case worker for the solution of his problem. The Western method of discussing the problem thread-



bare does not appeal to his sentiments. He appreciates the attitudes of the worker if he analyses the problems and offers sound advice.

This pattern is also noticed in the course of field work supervision of students of social work in India. Students expect the supervisors to give suggestions in the initial stages and they are willing to analyse them. Questions like "what do you think you should do?" are not liked by them, because they are not familiar with case work procedure. The burden of finding the solution, therefore, should not be pushed on them. After they have examined some of the suggestions regarding the solution offered by the case worker or the case work supervisor, they feel confident later to offer suggestions themselves. The writer is of the opinion that the clients' or the students' growth is not hampered if their learning pattern is understood and they are not made insecure in the beginning. As they gain confidence they are prepared to explore and try the unknown areas.

Some social case workers in India are obsessed with fear that a client will not be able to meet his life problems. If he is provided with advice he will not be able to think for himself and modify his ideas and beliefs. That is not always so. Much depends upon the spirit in which the advice is given, and also upon understanding the learning pattern of a person. It is sometimes remarkable to observe how in a number of cases (even of the illiterates) intellectual discussions enable the clients to classify their thinking and their feelings. Thereby they learn to control their emotions in a healthy way. This has been one of the traditional patterns of learning in our country.

As our people have more belongingness to the group in which they are born, it is expected that they will like to solve their problems by the members of that group only. If the case worker has to work with a group to which she does not belong by birth, it is often felt that she will not be accepted by that group. However, it has been observed that if the case worker has genuine interest in people and she tries to understand their resistance and be friendly with them she will be accepted by the group. It is remarkable to note with what ease an average Indian can absorb an outsider in

the group if she identifies herself with the group. The person will be regarded even as a member of the family and called uncle or aunt and even consulted in intimate family matters. The resistance to an outsider is more apparent than real. Our ancient literature bears testimony to the fact that the Indians have taken even foreigners into their fold.

An interesting cultural feature in India is the deep-rooted belief in *karma*. The word, *karma* is derived from Sanskrit *kri* to do. All action is *karma*. Technically, this word also means the effects of actions. In metaphysics it sometimes means the effects of which our past actions were the causes. It is in this sense that people generally feel that whatever good or bad things that happen to them are already decided by their past actions—by *karma* or fate. It is often interpreted as a fatalistic theory responsible for the lethargy of the Indian mind. Some case workers think that as people are fatalists and have no desire to bring about a change in their social situation, case work cannot be practised successfully in India. Sometimes, social workers fail to realize that activity and hard work are also rooted in this theory. If what we are now is the result of our past actions, it certainly follows that what we want at attain in future can be produced by our present actions; so we have to know how to act. It is here that the social case worker's skill lies in interpreting the theory which has such a deep root in the Indian mind and enthusing people to bring about a change for the better in their life situations. It is true that over a long period of time our population has suffered many hardships on account of political and economic reasons, and repeated frustrations have brought about mental inertia in some cases. Yet it has been found by the writer that reinterpretation of something which is so deeply rooted in our culture through instances and examples drawn from ancient Indian literature, has a great effect. The writer had a case of an adult, illiterate male who in course of interviews would talk about his desire to get rid of his debt, and maintain his family adequately. He was a shoemaker and a person of low caste. He often remarked that he was destined to be poor and, therefore, there was not much sense in doing hard

work. He wanted money from the medical social work department. The writer knew that the person was a physically strong man and capable of working hard. She did not scold him for his lethargy but gradually started enthusing him with the spirit of work. She used to discuss stories from *Mahabharata* with which he was familiar and their interpretation gradually brought home to his mind that the tradition did not show that Indians were fatalists and did not work to better their lot. Specially, the story of *Karma*<sup>6</sup> in the *Mahabharata* had made a great impression upon him. He often used to repeat the line—*Daivayttam kule janma madavaltam to Paurusham*. (To be born in a particular family or caste is in the hands of God, but it is within our power to put forth efforts to better our lot). He gradually started putting in more effort and earned more money. He began to derive satisfaction from his work and his family relationships, which had deteriorated earlier and for which the case was referred to the worker.

It is true that an average illiterate Indian grasps many deep and subtle points of philosophy when they are presented through the medium with which he is familiar, e.g., episodes from *Upanishads*, *Puranas*, *Bhagvatas*, *Jatakas*,<sup>7</sup> etc. An Indian social case worker would do well if she is familiar with Indian literature. Our traditional pattern of imparting knowledge was through religious channels, and our social workers will be able to gain access to the masses.

Since the First World War new psychological concepts and, in particular, psychoanalysis began to dominate the scene in the U.S.A. Consequently, the major emphasis has been upon the client as an individual rather than as a social being. Modern social case work stresses the skills of the case worker as having an insight into individuality and into personal characteristics and the ability to

<sup>6</sup>Karna the eldest brother of the Pandavas was abandoned by Kunti his mother, because he was born before her marriage. The child was brought up by a charioteer and was known to be his son. Since a charioteer belonged to a low caste, Karna suffered from many social handicaps. However, by dint of hard work he became king and was known for his virtuous deeds.

<sup>7</sup>*Veni Samhara*, 3: 33.

use direct influence of mind upon mind. Insight into the resources, dangers and influences of environment, and ability to bring indirect influence to bear upon the client through the environment which are essential parts of sociological approach in case work are more or less overlooked.

In India people stay closer to their family and the community. The social worker should, therefore, work through the agency of relatives of the client. It stands to reason that those whom the client accepts as friends or for whom he has respect or whom he regards as a member of his own social group have greater influence on him than the case worker coming in from outside can have. Thus, a case worker's role has to be that of an observer, manipulator as well as that of a direct participant (in relationships).

In the West, especially in the U.S.A., case workers sometimes are so deeply involved in the intensive treatment of maladjusted individuals that they fail to recognize the importance of general social problems, and so are not interested in programmes for social change. In India as has been mentioned before, there is a general tendency towards conformity to group norm on the part of people. Consequently, the traditional case work situations, where the individual's adjustment to his reality is disturbed due to internal or external strains, will be comparatively less. However, case work service will be of value in helping the individual whose adjustment to his reality is not disturbed at all to reach a new level of integration by introduction of new ideas and new ways of living. Case work should not be confined only to helping the client to adjust to the existing reality but also to become an active partner in the process of change for the betterment of society. This is being realized now in the West, too. An Indian case worker should not be tied to the agency set up, but be instrumental in bringing about a change in the individual as well as in the society. She should play an increasing part in community life and be in contact with conditions that affect groups as well as individuals.

Case work to be successful with Indian people will require case workers of high calibre. Those who grasp case work principles intellectually or those who hold to clients emotionally for eight

hours in the day and finish with them are not successful case workers. Case work has to be the philosophy of life, and it has to be lived. A case worker who does family counselling for others but cannot adjust to his own family will not be accepted by the masses. Indians derive inspiration not only from what a person talks, but, to a great extent, from the life he lives.

Now we come to the concept of 'professional self'. As the case worker is a human being with feelings and needs like the patient or the client, it has been recognized that his attitudes play an important part in the social treatment. Since it is essential that the client should not be diverted or handicapped by the injection of the case worker's personal needs into the situation, the importance of understanding and controlling one's own attitudes and needs have been emphasised. It is of importance in the matter of 'counter transference' too, (otherwise the therapist will have neurotic reactions towards the client). The concept of professional self in Western literature emphasises conscious control of personal needs and emotions on the part of the case worker. It is here that Indian culture can contribute a lot. Emphasis has been laid on the elevation of mind as the goal of life. A person by constant effort and practice can reach that stage of mind "which is neither perturbed by adversity nor does long for personal joy. It is free from attachment, fear and wrath."<sup>8</sup> It goes beyond the stage of conscious control of behaviour. It is attainment of a state of mind which is not ruffled by disturbances around. Such a mind works for the good of others. The poise, patience and inner joy of such a personality has a subtle influence on the mind of people who come across him. The noble life that a person leads sheds its beams around. We should be thankful to the West for formulating the principles of social case work like accepting the client as he is, working with the client and not for him. Their understanding can very well serve as stepping stones to reach the state of mind required of an efficient social case worker.

But all this can boil down to mere theory if it has no real spirit behind it. We look to India and her philosophy for guidance

<sup>8</sup>*Bhagvadgita*, II, 57.

in understanding the fundamental meaning and spiritual purpose of life. It is that which alone can lead to the development of true professional self—spiritual self. One should guard against false spirituality, inactivity and sloth, which quite often masquerade as spirituality. Genuine spiritual life must be intensively and selflessly active. It will manifest itself in purity, in clear vision, in cheerful and resolute devotion to a definite high purpose. It is true that spiritual life in India has been much affected by selfishness and corruption. The reality of spiritual life lies buried, the essence of it has been sacrificed to form, convention and lifeless worship of technology. The underlying spirit has to be discovered, and the law and techniques should be framed anew wherever needed, and obeyed with a consciousness of the spirit within.



## CHAPTER

# 29

### *Practice of Social Work:*

#### **From the angle of a Social Group Worker**

N. F. KAIKOBAD, M.S.W.(PITTSBURG)

THE word culture is derived from the Latin verb 'colore' meaning to 'cultivate' and the noun 'culture' means 'training' or 'cultivation'. According to Linton, culture is "the sum-total of knowledge, attitudes, habitual behaviour pattern shared and transmitted by the members of a particular society". Thus, every aspect of man's life reflects the culture he has acquired from the family and community of which he is a member. Satisfaction of his basic human needs are also culturally determined. These needs are satisfied within the frame of reference provided by his culture. It is necessary for a social worker to know and understand not only the cultures of the people he works with but also to be conscious of his own cultural frame of reference which determines his thinking. It is against the background of this knowledge that a social worker has to apply social work techniques of case work, group work or community organization. In this chapter, an attempt has been made to examine the cultural bearing on social group work practice in an Indian setting.

Before we proceed further, let us be clear about the fact that social group work method has not so far been applied extensively in India, and hence it is not possible to make generalisations based on field experience in a variety of settings. No doubt, there is increasing realization about the value of 'group approach' in community development field, and yet "activity-centred" approach is still dominant. Observations made in these lines are based on personal experiences as an executive of community centre and on those of the student group workers.



**Some Cultural Factors.**—It appears that the following cultural factors have a bearing on social group work practice in our setting:

- (1) Our social status system is based on castes. By and large, an overwhelming majority of us accept this system and they are considerably influenced by it. It determines our outlook on life, and colours our self-image, and our relative relationship with other groups in the society. People accept the social roles assigned to them by the system.
- (2) Social participation and leisure-time associations of a large number of our people occur in one's own caste groups.
- (3) There is a deep faith in destiny, even among the so-called educated people, and the theory of *karma* is most satisfying to the Indian mind. This theory, no doubt, is an asset in the time of calamities and crises in the life of an individual, but it also contributes to the continuance of *status quo* and blunts the edge of social inequality. The theory of *Karma* in itself has a message for a direct action, but the way in which it is understood by a majority of people, it creates an attitude of resignation to one's fate.
- (4) There is great respect for the 'wisdom of the age'. Authority of elder members of the joint family is generally taken for granted. The joint family system assigns status, roles and responsibilities to individuals towards the whole unit. This situation creates a certain predisposition which influences one's individuality and self-determination.
- (5) Leadership is generally vested in the elders of the social groups. It will not be wrong to say that the pattern of leadership is, more often than not, of a benevolent authoritarian type. Even during the days of national struggle for freedom this trait was quite evident in national leadership.

The qualities of a culture lie deep in the make-up of indivi-

duals, and create a basic predisposition to act in a particular manner in the society.

**Role of Group Work.**—At no other time in the history of our nation has the need for education for emotional integration and active citizenship been so acute than today. Casteism and linguistic differences offer certain threats to national unity and socio-economic development. Social change initiated by democratic decentralisation and other legislative measures demand increased and intelligent participation of the common man in community life. Ways and means have to be found not only to kindle devotion for democratic way of life but also to develop necessary will as well as skills for associating for common good. It seems that the small informal groups provide a good training ground to learn democratic ways of life.

The social work profession is dedicated to bringing about desirable changes in individuals, groups and communities. The members of the profession, especially the group workers and community workers, therefore, have to fulfil the role of creative agents of social change.

Social group work, to put it in the words of W. G. Newstetter, is "an educational process emphasizing (1) the development and social adjustment of an individual through voluntary group associations; and (2) the use of these associations as a means of furthering other socially desirable ends. Group work is concerned, therefore, with both individual growth and social results. Moreover, it is the combined and consistent pursuit of both these objectives, not merely one of them, that distinguishes group work as a process." Group work is an effective educational tool not only for the development of individual personality but for enabling individuals and groups of diverse social and cultural background to establish relationship through satisfying and creative inter-group experiences, which would develop respect and a reasonable attitude not only towards one's own cultural heritage but also towards that of others as well. A society striving to establish democracy

W. G. Newstetter, *Group adjustment*, Cleveland, Ohio: School of Applied Social Sciences, Western Reserve University, 1938.

in the real sense of the term, has to train its members not only to tolerate but to apprehend the diversity into national unity. To be a contributing member of a democratic society, an individual must have the necessary ability to make a wise choice of his leaders, to follow them and take on the role of leadership whenever necessary.

**Voluntary Groups.**—The goals stated above can be achieved by enabling people to learn the lessons of democracy through their small intimate voluntary group associations. In the process of every day living, people seek close association with others of 'their kind'. This is done without any conscious awareness, and the group workers in our community centres and social education and recreation agencies find that most of the voluntary groups have been based on either caste or language. Sometimes excellent work is being done with individual groups, but we do not find conscious attempts to bring the groups of diverse background together in purposeful inter-group relationship which is essential for their social development. There are, on the other hand, some agencies who try to push individuals of diverse backgrounds into common group activities even before the individuals are ready for such an experience. Formalised and activity-centred groups appeal only to those who are very keenly interested in those activities but they fail to attract people who enjoy associations in their own groups and are unwilling to participate individually. It is, therefore, necessary that the situations are provided to natural groups in which they feel secure, and at ease with the people of their own kind and are gradually led to wider participation. This approach may take a long time but is likely to achieve lasting results.

We may cite an example of an Urban Community Centre located in a thickly populated area in Bombay. This Centre became conscious of the fact that its service had not reached different caste groups. It was difficult to get the people of the neighbourhood to come together on matters of mutual interest. It was decided to assign two group workers to work with autonomous youth groups of Harijans and the Muslim community in their area. After group

workers stabilised their relationship with these groups, they dropped casual hints and extended an open invitation to these groups to participate in the activities of the community centre, but the groups avoided the issue. The centre, therefore, thought of evolving an agency-wide programme which would promote inter-caste or non-sectarian mixing. The idea, 'Play Centre evening', a programme which later on became a regular monthly feature of this community, was conceived by the agency under the leadership of the group worker who had spent considerable time in making the activity staff members aware of the educational role of the centre. On Play Centre evening, the groups would have a different worker for all the activities which were conducted on an inter-group basis. Thus, youths and children had a chance to come in contact with a new worker, and the person with whom they ordinarily did not play. Both Harijan and Muslim groups avoided the first Play Centre evening. A month later they yielded to the workers' persuasion to go there and see what was happening anyway. They went to the agency with their workers but remained as onlookers. Only a few members played indoor games among themselves. Both the groups sat together, somewhat separate from the agency groups when the entertainment programme followed the group activities. On a subsequent Play Centre evening the workers asked their groups whether they would like to contribute an item to the entertainment programme. The Muslim group did not accept the suggestion but the Harijan group did. The latter group was extremely pleased when its items were acclaimed as one of the best items. This encouraged the group to visit the agency. Its members dropped in to find out the date of similar forthcoming events. Some of the members next time ventured to enter into a mixed playgroup situation. The Muslim group which remained aloof so far began to participate in group games and contests, and seemed to enjoy them immensely. The staff of the agency saw to it that the members of these two new groups received their helpful attention without annoying other groups. In their respective group meetings, the workers helped the members to evaluate their experiences at the agency and pointed out how important it was

for youths to know and mix with people other than those of their own kind. The discussions gave the groups an opportunity to examine their feelings towards their own as well as other castes. Thus, through a purposeful activity it was possible to promote inter-group mixing for both the groups. After this pleasant experience some of their members went in for interest-centred activities sponsored by the agency. Both the groups later on gave non-Muslims and non-Harijans membership in their groups.

According to S. R. Slavson, the groups passed through five stages before they were ready to participate freely in an inter-group situation: (1) acclimatisation; (2) manipulation; (3) experimentation; (4) reflection ; and (5) socialisation.

In the beginning both the groups just dropped in as onlookers and watched others enjoying inter-group experiences but played separately. This may be called the stage of acclimatisation. When the Harijan group contributed an item to the entertainment programme and joined other indirect-interaction activities by sending their members to inquire about the future mass activities in the agency, they were manipulating with the situation to see how it would affect them. They experimented with new opportunities when they came in as a group but participated individually in different group activities during one of those evenings. When the workers helped them to discuss their feelings, the group had the opportunity to reflect over their relationship with others who were different from them. In the group meetings the workers helped them to face some of their feelings towards other caste groups.

When the groups no longer felt self-conscious about being different from the dominant caste group and participated as equals, they reached the stage of socialisation.

This example shows that the inter-group experiences require purposeful planning and execution of the programme. The group worker has to be sensitive to a group's feelings and to have patience with its slow pace of movement towards wider participation.

A group worker can use music, dance, dramatics and arts and crafts as tools to arouse interest of group members in the past and present contribution of different cultural groups in enriching

the cultural heritage of India. These activities can also encourage participation which cuts across the sectarian lines.

There are ample opportunities in a group work setting to help people to understand and appreciate the rich diversity of Indian culture and enable them to see its essential unity. There are unpredictable situations when the group would express its negative attitude towards the member of a different caste. Here the worker has an important role to play as an interpreter of cultural differences and help the group members to handle their feelings about other social and caste groups. It must be pointed out that the group worker's own cultural norms, his feelings and attitudes towards people of other caste groups need to be properly analysed and clarified before he can fulfil the role of an 'enabler' in this area. Mere intellectual understanding does not help in fulfilling professional responsibility. It has been found that some group workers themselves need considerable help in overcoming their negative feelings towards persons and groups different from their kind.

**Worker, Group and Self-Determination.**—A young Indian group worker recently had the opportunity to go to the U.S.A. under the Cleveland Youth Leadership Training programme which provides practical training for a period of four months to the youth workers from different parts of the world. What struck him as a striking characteristic of children and youths in that country was their initiative, independence and self-reliance. Our children and youths compared to their counterparts in the West seem to be more submissive to and dependent on the adults for direction. The joint family system which is gradually losing its original authority over individuals in our culture is still wielding considerable influence on the personality of our people. Whatever may be the other merits of the joint family system, it places, no doubt, a higher value on conformity and submission to adult authority than the needs and desires of an individual. Invariably, the system discourages individuality, initiative and independence. This factor has a considerable bearing on worker-group relationship in group work practice. Children and youth groups seem to look upon their workers more as teachers, *masterji* or *guruji* than anything else.

A group worker has a difficult task to lead the groups from entire dependence on the worker to self-reliance. Some adult groups also need considerable help for a long period to move in the direction of democratic self-determination. It is, therefore, necessary for a group worker to fit his method of approach to the realistic situation. We are inclined to believe that if the groups are accustomed to directive type of leadership, the worker has to accept and adopt the leadership pattern of the group to start with and gradually lead the group out of that pattern. A group worker may have pretty good intellectual understanding of group work theory, but if he does not understand and offer the leadership role the group members are used to, a group has to pass through a 'preparatory period' before it is able to move in with ease in the area of democratic self-determination. Democracy is more an attitude of mind towards self and others than mere procedures of organization.

Furthermore, the principle of democratic self-determination also needs to be examined in the context of the organization and management of our social agencies, many of whose philosophy is still rooted in the ideas of 'uplift' and 'charity'. Social agencies functioning in the area of social education and leisure time services are serving underprivileged communities. Members of their managing committee and the staff are mostly drawn from the upper or middle class. Most of the professionally trained workers also belong to this stratum of society. Thus, there is an inevitable cultural gap between producers of services and consumers of services of the agency. Many sponsors of agencies recognize the value of self-determination but they are more keen on sponsoring and supporting those activities which in their opinion will do 'some tangible good' to their clientele. Most of the agencies emphasise on skill-teaching activities. Moreover, there is a tendency to place a high value on tidy patterns of programme. What happens to a member during the activity and how it influences him are given a lesser consideration than to the quality of the programme.

At times, group workers face a situation when the agency wants the groups to undertake certain activities and promote them

in an aggressive manner while the groups show preference for something which the agency thinks to be a sheer waste of time and resources. It needs to be realized that the people living in underprivileged or slum areas have a difficult life situation to cope with in terms of overcrowded living, lack of privacy, lack of opportunity for self-expression and recognition and economic uncertainty. The members of the groups coming from such a background need leisure time activities that can give scope for working out tensions and frustration. Their preference for aggressive, competitive and rough and boisterous activities is, therefore, quite understandable.

A group worker has also to take into consideration the factors of social approval or disapproval of certain type of activities while helping the groups to choose its programme. The members of a group belonging to a higher caste were keen on learning leather craft but parental disapproval made the group give up that activity.

In short, we may say that for successful group work practice it is necessary to understand the cultural factors that affect individuals and groups and also the organizations and institutions which have an impact on their daily life.





## CHAPTER

# 30

### *Practice of Social Work:*

#### **From the angle of a Social Community Organizer**

K. D. GANGRADE, M.S.W.(MICHIGAN)

A COMMUNITY organizer in India is confronted with the task of helping the rural people with health problems and child rearing. He has understood one of the social work principles: "to start where the people are", he knows the situation among the people and can feel the problems himself. Yet they actually do not care about modern health practices. Methods based on superstition are satisfactory to them. What right has the community organizer to introduce his value system? What are the goals for such a community and is he allowed to have goals for people if he at the same time adheres to the idea of self-determination?

Social Work profession in general needs to clarify its value system because its core is relationships between human beings, and social workers cannot just remain scientific observers, but must be active conditioners and helpers. In doing so, to what extent should the cultural factors be taken into consideration to understand and solve the problems of the community?

**Concept of Community Organization.**—Before we discuss the cultural factors and their bearings on the practice of social work from the angle of a community organizer, it is necessary to explain the concept of the community organization.

To understand the concept of "community organization" it is essential that one should know the nature of the rural and urban

community and the meaning of the words, community organization. There is much ambiguity and vagueness as to the precise meaning of the words, community organization. It may help to approach this problem by asking a question as to what is meant by a community as unorganized or disorganized. The word unorganized usually implies the absence of certain facilities or agencies or institutions which seem desirable and which one might expect to find. The disorganized community refers to one which is decadent, in which have arisen conflicts so sharp that its normal community life has been disrupted. It is not only multiplicity of institutions or interest groups or available activities which make the organized community, for it may be overburdened in this respect and still lack organization as a community. The determining factor is rather integration and co-ordination of whatever agencies or institutions, do exist, and evolving new agencies and institutions to meet the changing condition of the time.

**Definition of Community Organization.**—Community organization can be defined in the following words: by community organization is meant a process by which a number of people identify their common needs or objectives, order these needs or objectives, develop the confidence and the will to work for these needs or objectives, find resources to deal with them, take action in respect to them and in doing so develop and extend co-operation and collaborative attitudes and practices.<sup>1</sup> By community we mean a number of people who have gone through the process of community organization and the community organizer is a person who promotes or engineers this process. In other words, community organization is a social mechanism which helps the smooth functioning of social organization.

In order to diagnose the problem of the community, the community organizer must study the socio-demographic structure and various factors affecting them. The first step for a community organizer in India is to study the social organization of Indian

<sup>1</sup>Murray G. Ross, *Community Organization—Theory and Principles*, New York: Harper and Brothers, 1955, p. 39.

society. India is a country of villages or small communities. This puts India in a more advantageous position than many of the Western countries, as small communities provide an ideal base for the process and practice of community organization. Caste *pañchayat* (council), village *panchayats*, inter-village *panchayats* and circle *panchayats* are spread throughout India. These traditional forms of *panchayats* could form the nucleus of community organization to serve the community.

**Social Organization.**—Indian Social Organization is characterised by the interplay of several different kinds of solidarities—kinship, caste and territorial affinities. Caste governs to a considerable degree the organization of kinship and territorial unity. The caste divisions are regarded as divinely ordained and are hierarchically graded. The difference between various segments is defined by tradition and regarded as permanent. In inter-group relations the caste structure works according to a set pattern of principles. Each caste is given its own traditional occupation. The concept of dominant caste should be understood as it is the determinant factor in inter-caste relations and unity of the village. Besides, caste system, joint and individual family system play a vital role in drawing a plan of social welfare services. Under the joint family system as many as three generations may live together at any time in the same hive. It is a kind of patriarchal organization where the eldest male member controls all affairs. Correspondingly, the senior female member is the head with corresponding authority in matters of household management, and often has a considerable influence in general matters as well. The earnings of house members flow into a common pool from which drafts to meet the needs of all are regulated by the family head—everyone earning according to his capacity and receiving according to his need. The joint family takes the place of national social insurance, guaranteeing basic subsistence to all, the orphans, the disabled, the aged, the unfortunate widows, as well as the temporarily unemployed. The system, however, discourages individuality, initiative and enterprise and tends to act as a drag on social and economic progress. Great changes are taking place in Indian society

since the British rule and with the advent of independence. Causes of social unrest are legion and only a few of the social ones may be mentioned here. Among urban middle classes two contrary movements may be noted. The first is the rapidly falling standard of living resulting from the discrepancy between diminishing real income and the comparative fixity of the obligations of status and prestige, the second is the social climbing of the lower middle to the upper stratum. Socio-cultural and psychological barriers between the lower-middle classes and the proletariat have not been broken down, and the in-group feeling among the upper middle stratum though weakening still persists.

With the weakening of the joint family, loosening of social control and with the rise in urban population, the country is facing many modern problems like juvenile delinquency, growth of mental illness and other tensions which threaten the unity of the country. There is an awareness of the need to evaluate our existing social institutions.

Religion regulates the life of the people, and the religious leader is very much respected and revered by the people. In most of the cases he presumes to know the solution to all problems of the community.

The community organizer is faced with many cultural problems like religious belief of the people, the religious leader, traditional leader, age, sex, and difference in attitude towards time, social change, work and dependency, and formal organization.

#### **Important Aspects of Social Situation.—**

It has already been stated that the temple or church or mosque plays an important role in the lives of Indian people. Their religion is orthodox in the sense that only a literal interpretation of the religious book is admitted. They believe that men should only follow the word of God and they are, therefore, very critical towards any agency or government that bases its policy on consideration of a rational technical kind which originates from a firm belief that man can, to a great extent, decide his own future. A religious leader comes on the scene and exploits the people because of their blind faith. If he is a considerate leader he

canalises the faith for the good of the people. In one of the slum areas I found that the priest of the temple popularly called *Guru* was successful in helping the people to construct a school for boys and girls. The people could not think of disobeying the orders of their *Guru*. At another time in one of the villages a *Swamiji* who had renounced the world appeared, and the people began to think that God had appeared in their village in the garb of a *Swamiji*. The *Swamiji* said if they wished good of their people they should build a *Shiva* temple and a road. All the villagers obeyed the command and carried out the plan as directed by the *Swamiji*, fearing that the failure to follow the orders of the *Swamiji* would bring the wrath of the gods on the village and the villagers. The village has a road and a temple which serves as a meeting place and recreation centre. Most of these religious leaders think that they know solutions to all the problems of the community even before understanding the problem. Thus there was a community organizer who presumed that he knew the problems before he arrived in the community and began to organize the community around his concept of goal and need.

The community organizer would have to work with such leaders and cannot ignore the religious sentiments of the people. It is obvious that in such a social situation it is extremely difficult to start any new organization. Even within one religious group one is afraid of arousing antagonism and in most groups the burden on the financial resources and on the small group of leaders is already so heavy that one simply cannot afford to start anything new.

In another case a young community organizer organized a meeting and spoke to the people to organize themselves to construct a road, as without it they were faced with many problems of health, marketing and schooling for their children. The young man rose to speak, folded his hands and bowed his head in deference, but nobody noticed. When he said, "Respected elders and brothers, I wish to put before you a proposal that is of the greatest importance to us", the hubbub continued as before. The fight between two boys had reached a climax and there was an

ear-pearcing scream before they started to chase each other in a circle round the assemblage. The infant had been lulled to sleep and the people nearest to him stopped talking, but there was still too much hubbub for him to go on.

An old man, the *Patel* of the village stood up furiously and said, "You, over there; can't you keep your mouths shut for a little while?" This was the voice of authority, the voice of age.

It may be interesting to note in another example the remarks of a widow who all these days resented to give some portion of her land for the common cause of the village, gave the land on the request of the former *Patel*. She said that she had always meant to give up the land, but she did not want to negotiate with a puppy like Ram. She further said that at last the elderly *Patel* had to come to her and request her with folded hands to give up her land.

A number of examples could be cited to show the authority of the priest and elders. Most of the problems are not recognized by many of the people living in the community. It may be that one leader or a few individuals or a small group of people may see the need and want to do something about it. If these leaders use proper methods in working with the community, their activities may have highly positive values and bring about great improvement in necessary services. The community organizer, therefore, has to work with the leaders, subgroups and subcultures of a community.

**Difference in Orientation to Time.**—A community organizer has to face a problem of different orientation of people towards time. The community organization works through the medium of committees and expects people to attend committee meetings at a specified hour. Recently, I had an occasion to attend a village *panchayat* meeting which was decided to be held at one o'clock in the afternoon. Except the *sarpanch* (chairman of the village council) the rest of the members did not turn up in time. After waiting for half an hour the *sarpanch* adjourned the meeting because there was no quorum. Later at about two o'clock, some members turned up and demanded from the *sarpanch* to hold the meeting and

scolded him for adjourning it. Their argument was that they did not have clocks, timepieces or wrist watches. They go by the shadow of the sun. In urban areas also people do not keep up to time. In Western countries, "time is money" and a high value is placed on "being in time".

The rhythm of life in an Indian village is seasonal rather than diurnal. What one does on a particular day does not matter. What one does during the year matters a great deal. Thus people very rarely think of the urgency of the task assigned to them. This attitude of people towards time leads the authorities to believe that people would take to community action if they are coerced.

The people began to be bewildered when asked by a community organizer, "what day and time would you like to come to the hospital?" How are they to reply to this strange question? How can they know how they may feel the following week or what they will be doing? What is there to make one day preferable to another? This apathy towards time caused a man his life. He was known to have tuberculosis in an early stage, but refused to take treatment because he felt well at the moment and saw no point then in inconveniencing himself in order to avoid a possible consequence in the nebulous future.

Sometimes as community organizers we tend to give less importance to our attitude towards time as it is difficult to understand how anyone would have a different point of view. The difference in point of view would well be illustrated by an old story of the grasshopper and the ant. The eminently sensible grasshopper lives each day according to the imperatives of the day, enjoying what must be enjoyed, enduring what must be endured. The coming of winter brings more than he can endure, and he perishes having lived fully and well albeit briefly. The foolish ant with an eye on the future toils throughout the summer storing up food grains against the coming cold. She survives the winter and is rewarded with another summer's toil. The interpretation of the story will depend upon one's own value system. Nevertheless it proves that people can have different attitudes towards time and many behave or react differently in given situations.



**Difference in Attitude towards Change.**—The community organizer is an agent of change and he indirectly works to bring change in the community with a view to helping them to have a better community life. This he may bring about by creating discontent or finding the spot of discontentment in the community, as it is believed that discontent leads to a more dynamic involvement of the community to plan and solve its discontentment. It is said that the Indians and particularly the Indian farmer is very slow to change, because he believes in the theory of *Karma* and remains content as he thinks that his present state of affairs is due to his past deeds and wants to do better in the present life to improve his future or the next life after death. Thus there is a quite different orientation towards change and progress. Their ancestors live for many generations in an environment in which there was almost no change as they followed their traditional caste occupation and the traditional value system. The major part of the country was in isolation owing to lack of means of communication. The land tenure system of the British created a class of landlords but they very rarely considered it their duty to look after the welfare of their clients. Very rarely a change occurred in the lifetime of a man. It is not possible to appreciate this attitude of people even in the urban areas as we fail to understand that this attitude towards progress and change has been inherited from the village.

For example, the parents of Hamidpur and Bakauli villages believe that their daughters-in-law should not be sent along with their sons who work and live in Delhi city as it would not be possible to impose social control on the young couple. This attitude of the people causes a number of problems to the individuals and the community. But even now people are averse to change and even married couples cannot think of bringing their wives to live with them. In other words, most of them want to hold on to whatever they can of the old and familiar order rather than pursue the new. It does not mean people are averse to change. But they do not accept change always for better as most of the Americans do. If the community organizer has been able to use the right type of methods and approaches, people have changed and

adopted new methods to solve their problems as is evident in most of the community development programmes.

**Differences in Attitude towards Work and Efficiency.**—The majority of the Indians are engaged in agricultural pursuits and their ideal is *to be* rather than *to do*. To place a villager one has to know his caste, age and sex, to what family he belongs and his position in the family. The status is ascribed and not achieved. These factors limit the attitude of the people towards work, success and efficiency. This gives clues to the community organizer why people seem to be less ambitious and have apparently no drive for success and live a contented life year after year with no desire to move upwards. In this situation the community organizer has to take the initiative and help the people to give up their lethargy. But he should not be tempted to tell the people what they should do. People have some ideas of their needs. The task of the community organizer is to begin with this and gradually goes on uncovering other needs.

This can be illustrated from experience of working with a village community. The community organizer discovered that the first thing the villagers wanted to do was to get rid of the gambling habit. This did not sound like a healthy beginning, but he accepted this need as a starting point. Several packs of playing cards were collected from various homes and publicly burned in the village square. Then the community organizer asked, "Now you cannot gamble in the evening. What do you want to do with your spare time?" He was able to evoke a set of new recreational activities in the village which included a club for young farmers to discuss agricultural practices and a volley-ball team. None of these activities was imposed by the community organizer but represented the skilfully guided advice of the villagers themselves. Consequently, this is *their* programme and not *his*; from the very beginning the workers have been involved in *their* own development work.

**Differences in Attitudes of Acceptance and Resignation.**—There is a tendency among people to accept and resign themselves to whatever destiny brings him. The people in the Western

world would like to struggle to overcome environmental limitations and make an effort to reach the goals of one's own choosing. The people are likely to meet difficulties by adjusting to them rather than by attempting to overcome them, because they believe that fate has ordained them to be so and there is nothing to be gained by struggling against it. This is very much evident in the recent "Save Rohtak operation". The flood threat to Rohtak assumed a serious proportion as the drainage system of the town was disrupted by gushing water which shattered a wall of the sewage station, choked the plant, and water flowed through the drains into the low-lying parts. The army was pressed in to work to wage a desperate battle to save the people. But the people had not joined hands with the authority or the army to save Rohtak. Their apathy was due to the belief that it is God's wrath on them for their sins and from such a calamity none can protect them.

**Difference in Attitude towards Dependency.**—The goal of social work is to help the people to help themselves and a good number of agencies in Western countries, particularly America are deliberately designed to transfer people as rapidly as possible from a dependent to an independent state. It is believed that any assistance which does not involve participation on the part of the recipient or consumer is not likely to be appreciated and is going to prove harmful as it tends to minimise any incentive towards independence.

Indian culture does not give high value to an individual's independence. The unit of independence in India was the village community. Within the village there was considerable inter-dependence due to patron and client system or *Jajmani* system. The traditional institutions took the form of social security and social insurance and hence there were no agencies whose specialized functions were to give assistance to the people. Being a patriarchal society there was too much dependency on the male elder and his authority. The dependant had very rarely any say even in the choice of his bride or career. When a voice of authority and age was heard people calmed down and began to listen to the worker. This attitude of

dependency leads people to view the giving and receiving of help as the normal functions of the agency. The individual begins to think that he needs help and should accept it as long as it is available. The protection given by our social legislation to the scheduled castes and backward classes makes them more and more dependent and every year the list of the scheduled castes and backward classes goes on increasing as people think it is their right to receive help and be dependent on the government or other welfare agencies. In Western countries dependency of even a slight degree is undesirable and is considered pathological.

#### **Difference in Attitudes towards Formal Organization.—**

The formal organizations are negligible as in our small communities the needs of the people are met through informal relationships of the community itself. As the community can be considered a primary group in which each member has intimate contacts with other members and each has an opportunity to know the others in nearly all their several roles. For each type of activity and each interest area there are set patterns of relationship into which individuals are fitted according to ascribed characteristics. This makes people apathetic towards formal organizations.

The different aspects of culture mentioned above will not be present to the same extent in different parts of the country. In one place one aspect may dominate and elsewhere another. However, a community organizer must be prepared to face most of the aspects mentioned above. It will depend on his insight and skill whether he will see these aspects as annoying problems one should not give too much attention to, or whether he will see them as parts of a reality which he should try to understand as well as possible. At close examination many circumstances that at first seem only barriers to his work, may turn out to provide many opportunities to achieve positive developments. The community organizer must develop skills in the use of the professional self, the committee process, consultation and negotiations, use of relationship and movement, citizen participation and knowledge of community resources. The skills developed by a community organizer can be very much helpful in enlisting the participation of the people in the commu-

nity development programme and specially enabling the various *zila parishad* and *panchayat samitis* to make the scheme of democratic decentralisation a success and thereby do a great deal for the effective working of democracy.

To sum up, not only the practice of community organization but also social work in India stand at a different level from one in the West. Its professionalisation must take its own way in opposition to certain deep-seated and ancient conceptions. The act of helping a person in trouble is considered to be in Indian culture a personal equation. The thought of being paid a salary for helping others is repugnant to many. Some of the principles labelled as social work principles did not concern social work exclusively but referred to ethical and aesthetical problems of society holding good for all and any profession as a matter of fact for every responsible citizen.

The principles and methods of social work are so much related to the American social, economic and cultural patterns of life that they hold little significance or possibility of application for the other social scene. But the main principle to accept is the scientific approach to the problems the profession is called upon to deal with. This necessitates to include certainly the effort to investigate scientifically the validity of these principles for different social settings. Let us repeat for a moment the applicability of the principle of "self-determination" which although applicable in India may necessitate a new definition of the 'self'. Who is to decide? One may wonder all along whether this would still be the same principle or whether it would not be good to attempt a new formulation which would also apply to Indian ego in the accepted sense of the term rather than to re-define a concept from another culture.

## **Part Five**

### **PLANNING AND ADMINISTRATION OF SOCIAL WORK**



## CHAPTER

# 31

### *Social Welfare in Five-year Plans*

P. D. KULKARNI, B.A., DIP. S.S.A. (T.I.S.S.)

BEFORE India launched upon planned development the situation in the field of Social Welfare was somewhat nebulous. Traditionally, welfare work in India lay mostly in the voluntary sector. The voluntary organizations had displayed certain strengths which qualified them to handle this task ably. As in other countries, the voluntary organizations have always been the pioneers in the field and have showed the direction and set the pace for the initiation of welfare services. It was they who had kept the torch of service burning when the national leadership was engaged in a vital struggle for the political emancipation of the country. There were, however, certain weaknesses which had begun to show in the voluntary organizations. Voluntary action in the very nature of its spontaneous response to local needs, was sporadic and isolated. With the growing complexity of social problems, the need for trained social workers was also being increasingly felt. The training of social workers on scientific lines had, however, lagged considerably behind this awareness. A number of voluntary organizations had to carry on with untrained, part time volunteers. Another great difficult which severely hampered the work of voluntary organizations was that of resources; with the recent socio-economic changes the days of princely philanthropy and magnificent charity had come to an abrupt end.

These weaknesses called for the following remedial measures: (1) an over-all national plan for social welfare into which the efforts of individual voluntary organizations could be dovetailed;



and (2) organization of a programme of financial and technical assistance.

**Emphasis on Voluntary Action.**—In defining the official policy on social welfare, the first Five-Year Plan made it clear that the major responsibility for implementing welfare programmes would continue to remain with voluntary organizations for quite sometime to come. There were two reasons for this decision. In the first place, under the pressure of competitive priorities, the State did not have much to spare by way of resources for social welfare. Secondly, the human touch which is so necessary in the administration of welfare services is best provided by voluntary workers. Such a policy also serves to recognize the high traditions of voluntary social service which are an integral part of Indian culture.

**Central Welfare Board.**—Recognising this, the Government of India set up the Central Social Welfare Board, to assist the voluntary organizations in strengthening and developing their welfare services on a planned basis. This body was different from any other body constituted under a Government either here or abroad. Its difference lies mainly in two points: it is predominantly non-official in composition with the official representation limited to the Central Ministries dealing with social services; secondly, it was given the powers to implement its own decisions, within the broad terms of its appointment, without further reference to the Government of India. This was necessary to make sure that financial assistance reaches the voluntary organizations without passing through the usual criss-cross ways of government procedure. The Board was charged with two major functions. In addition to aiding the existing voluntary organizations, the Board was also expected to sponsor and assist new services, wherever needed. An attempt has been made in the following few pages to review the progress of welfare services during the two plan-periods. In doing so, statistical indices of progress have been relegated to appendix I, keeping the text focussed mainly on the qualitative aspect of services.

**Evolution of an Aid Policy.**—While the Board's assistance has

breathed a new life into a large number of local voluntary organizations, its country-wide programme of state assistance has thrown up certain problems which merit closer examination. The main points to consider in this context are: (1) determination of objective criteria to serve as the basis of grants-in-aid; (2) the question of quantum of State assistance vis-a-vis the self-help effort of institutions; and (3) the role of a grant-giving body in promoting minimum standards of welfare services.

Several ideas and new points have emerged as a result of the Board's grant-in-aid policy and its frequent revisions. It, however, remains to make the resultant knowledge and experience articulate and to apply it to the review of this policy. A Grant-in-code Committee has been appointed to work out a simple though rational system of the administration of State aid.

The Board's record in sponsoring new welfare services is obviously spectacular. In fact, it has been said that it was expeditious to a fault. The important programmes initiated and substantially assisted by the Board are: (1) a country-wide scheme to extend welfare services for women and children in rural areas; (2) a scheme for the welfare of families in a few selected urban areas offering gainful employment to women in their spare time; (3) a programme for after care of persons discharged from correctional and non-correctional institutions; (4) a service for the rescue and rehabilitation of women in moral danger; (5) organization of urban community welfare centres; and (6) co-ordination with other governmental bodies executing economic programmes to supplement welfare activities.

In the latter half of the second plan period, they also sponsored and aided other new schemes, e.g., condensed courses for adult women, holiday homes for children, night shelters for pavement dwellers and welfare extension projects in urban areas. Incidental to the organization of welfare schemes, the Board had also to arrange at its own cost ancillary programmes for training and publicity.

The outstanding feature of the Board's achievements is the fact that most of these programmes are implemented through a

country-wide network of organizations, which are predominantly non-official.

The precise significance of planning and administration of social welfare services in the Government cannot be appreciated. The Plans have always sought to distinguish between social services and social welfare services. Social services are meant to connote established services like Education and Health which are meant for the entire normal community. The social welfare services are those which are specialized services meant to enable handicapped and maladjusted individuals and groups to reach their full potential. A school for the blind, a home for destitutes, a certified institution for delinquents, after care of discharged prisoners or rehabilitation of women rescued from moral danger are some of the examples of social welfare services. Welfare services for these sections of population known as vital though vulnerable, e.g., women and children, are also an integral part of welfare services.

**Governmental Organization.**—While the Board was busy with building up its organization which has by now reached the village level, another trend was prominently visible in the States. Various State Governments started setting up welfare departments. The departments mainly deal with the welfare of backward classes, youth welfare, programmes for the control of vagrancy and beggary, after care and social and moral hygiene schemes. They are also progressively trying to translate into action the obligation placed on them by the social legislation that existed on the statute book but had been inadequately implemented. Emergency of the separate departments of Social Welfare incidentally raised the question of demarcation of respective notes of the State Social Welfare Advisory Boards and welfare departments.

The administrative pattern at the Central and State levels are very irregular. The six Union Ministries of Education, Health, Home Affairs, Community Development, Labour and Employment, and Rehabilitation are dealing directly or indirectly with social welfare subjects. There are other Ministries at the Centre, namely, Defence, Railways, Transport and Communications which also have welfare programmes for their own employees. These welfare

services are mostly confined to amenities. As such they do not conflict with the social welfare services in the specialized sense.

The Central Social Welfare Board is functioning virtually as an autonomous body under the general administrative control of the Ministry of Education. The Board deals with welfare services organized by and through a large number of voluntary organizations.

**Innovation without Standardisation.**—At the State level, there are separate Directorates or Departments of Social Welfare in eight States. In other States, social welfare subjects are spread over many departments. Even in the States where Social Welfare departments exist, they do not deal with identical subjects.

It would be seen that as many as 17 different departments are dealing with some aspect or the other of Social Welfare in the various States. Child welfare services alone are dealt with by eight different departments. "Social defence", for example, is dealt with by nine different departments. In other words, Social Welfare departments in the States do not deal with the same services and a single welfare service is not handled by any one department. Normally, in the context of multiplicity of agencies, co-ordination is suggested as a useful device to avoid overlapping and duplication. The main problem of social welfare is that of consolidation of clearly identifiable social welfare services under one department. That would eliminate the avoidable multiplicity of agencies.

After grouping the social welfare services under one head, there will be some social welfare schemes left with different departments or Ministries. There are some social welfare services which cannot be easily isolated from the parent department or Ministry, wherein social welfare services are being administered. For instance, there are social welfare services linked up with education, namely: pre-primary education, social education, education of the handicapped which are closely linked up with education. Treatment of the handicapped and their organic rehabilitation cannot be easily separated from the medical health department which looks after the treatment of the handicapped. Co-ordination would, therefore, still be necessary with regard to such social welfare services.

One important omission may be obvious in the foregoing description of the governmental organization of welfare services, that is, the absence of Ministry of Social Welfare at the Centre. There is no single Ministry or body at the Centre today which can adequately fill the role of Ministry or a statutory body with direct and effective jurisdiction over the welfare departments of the State Governments. Recently, as a result of a recommendation of the Study Team on Social Welfare, the Ministry of Education has consolidated various Social Welfare schemes under the Department of Social Welfare. For all practical purposes, it functions as a Ministry of Education and Social Welfare, though it is not yet designated as such.

**Significant Trends.**—Summarising the foregoing review, it would be apparent that the most important trends that have taken shape in the field of Social Welfare during the last ten years can be stated as follows: (1) from isolated local effort to concerted national effort; (2) from composite services to various categories of handicapped and maladjusted individuals to single specific services for different categories of problem individuals; (3) from mere custodial care to training, after care and rehabilitation, economically and socially; (4) from the stage of questioning the need of training for social work upto a unanimous insistence on training for various categories of personnel—multi-purpose and specialized; (5) (a) from indiscriminate charity to regular State assistance; (b) from munificent philanthropy to limited grants-in-aid; and (c) from the stage when social workers were not accountable for the expenditure of public funds to the present day when every rupee of State aid has to be properly accounted for.

Some of the more important problems in the field of planning of social welfare services in India which still demand a closer examination can be enumerated as follows:

(1) Lack of comprehensive and reliable data on the size and nature of social problems and the kind and extent of the welfare services existing in the country.

While organized and extensive research has just begun to take shape with government support, it has still to go a long

way to make available the basic data which alone can form the basis of realistic planning.

(2) Closer and continuous association of the non-governmental organizations in the formulation and implementation of plans.

For this purpose, the major non-governmental organizations have to build up their strength at the base and make their voice articulate and representative enough to be heard with respect.

(3) The problem of consolidating the resources of the States for more economic and effective application.

This hinges upon a deeper realization that expenditure on social services is not considered "unproductive" in terms of the orthodox principles of concerted drives for raising of funds.

(4) For a country expanding its welfare services at a faster rate and over a wider area, the problem of finding a large number of the right type of personnel within a short time has become urgent.

As a corollary, the need for standardisation and gradation of training programmes for various categories of personnel is also making itself felt.

**Perspective Planning.**—A word about perspective planning for Social Welfare. Is it desirable? How far is it feasible? Are there any physical targets which can be defined in the field of Social Welfare? Do we come across certain difficulties in doing that in terms comparable with the economic plans? If one takes the composite field of social services as a whole, certain targets can no doubt be indicated. The rates of infant and maternal mortality, the expectancy of life, the nutritional requirements of children and adults, the number of children who should go to schools are some of the targets which have already been fixed. The successive plans aim at reaching these targets in order to arrive at the desired position by the end of the stipulated period.

In the field of Social Welfare proper, we are dealing with certain handicapped or maladjusted sections of the population. One can definitely say that the incidence of beggary, crime or prostitution should be reduced to a particular level, (a certain percentage of the present numbers involved) with a view to eradi-

cating the problems ultimately. One can also lay down that a certain number of the physically and mentally handicapped should be rehabilitated over a period of 25 years by providing the required number of institutions. It would have been possible to adopt a statistical approach if we were in possession of the basic statistical data in terms of a bench-mark position. Unfortunately, there has been no accurate assessment of the total needs in the field of Social Welfare. In the absence of an assessment of needs, planning would normally prove wasteful. Fortunately or unfortunately, our needs in the field of Social Welfare are so vast (in terms of sheer numbers) and our resources are so limited that whatever we are able to achieve during the next five plans is not likely to overshoot the mark.

**Welfare Planning Directional.**—This is not to say that the planners of social welfare should not keep in view at least the direction in which the progress has to be made. Further, since it is not possible to make an attack on all kinds of social problems, certain types of social problems may have to be picked for concentrated attention. One very natural rule that can be utilised for this purpose is to identify such social problems as are directly holding back economic development. Secondly, we could also promote those welfare services which would directly accelerate the economic progress of the country.

Applying this rule it would appear that the entire area of Social Defence must receive a higher priority in terms of minimising beggary, crime and prostitution. Its results will be two-fold. The resources which are today being absorbed by the anti-social elements would be substantially released for diversion to some positive schemes. The individuals thus reclaimed would also add to the number of useful citizens, taking part in producing more wealth for the country.

**Relieving the Deadlock.**—Secondly, deadlock on the front of rehabilitation should be resolved and the institutions which are today stagnant pools of pious intentions should be converted into live channels of economic rehabilitation and social assimilation. Once you have opened up the institutions at the other end, there

will be quick and sufficient room for the large numbers, who are waiting outside for similar institutional care.

Lastly, increasingly larger number of welfare services will have to be organized outside the institutions so that all those who are today on the verge of slipping into some problem or the other would be protected. There are a large number of people who are on the brink of some social problem or the other because of want, disease, ignorance, idleness or squalor. In addition, there are groups usually referred to as "vital though vulnerable", namely, children and women who need to be protected and helped to rise to their best potentialities. In other words, a lower line of defence has to be built all around the community which will serve as not only a preventive measure but also as a powerful force to develop human resources over a period of time.

In fact, the famous Chinese proverb is well worth remembering. "If you are planning for one year, plant corn; if you are planning for 10 years, plant trees and if you are planning for 100 years, plant men." If there is any wisdom in this adage we can do no better than giving a higher priority to Child Welfare so that all the economic development which our present plans will bring about, will not be undone by the citizens of tomorrow. The success of perspective planning would lie in building up a strong, progressive and able generation for the future which will be worthy of the achievements of the present day plans.



# APPENDIX I

## A Statement of Progress in the Field of Social Welfare in the First two Plans—1951-61

(Rs. in lakhs)

S. No.	PROGRAMMES	PROVISION 1951-61		EXPENDITURE 1951-61				PHYSICAL TARGETS ACHIEVED 1951-61		REMARKS
		First plan	Second plan	First plan	Second plan	First plan	Second plan	First plan	Second plan	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9		
<b>I Central Social Welfare Board's Programmes:</b>										
1	Grants-in-aid to voluntary institutions *	400.00	250.00	75.43	251.67	2174 institutions existed	4772 institutions existed upto March, 1960	*Includes the provision for the W.E.Ps.		
2	Grants to Welfare Extension Projects, including maintenance of Social Welfare Advisory Board's grants for buildings, purchase of jeeps, etc.	*	535.00	85.00	478.31	300 welfare extension projects	@134 W.E.Ps of original pattern started 292 W.E.Ps. maintained @256 W.E.Ps. of C.D. pattern started	@ Upto December, 1959		
3	Expenditure on training schemes and after care	..	50.00	..	41.54	..	..	..		
4	Publicity, administration and contingencies	..	35.00	..	44.09	..	..	..		

# APPENDIX I (Contd.)

5	New schemes, such as urban community centres, condensed training courses for women, socio-economic programmes and night shelters, etc.	..	50.00	..	58.99	78 W.E.Ps. (Urban) sanctioned. 194 institutions sanctioned grants for condensed courses of training for women. 306 persons trained in Ambar Charkha and handicrafts and 189 under training. 12 Units of Handloom-cum-production centres sanctioned. 745 persons working in Urban family welfare scheme. 4 ancillary units 42 night shelters sanctioned.	Upto 29th February 1960.
		..	400.00	920.00	160.43	874.60	
Total							
II Programmes of Ministry of Home Affairs:							
1	Social and moral hygiene and after care services (now under Ministry of Education)	..	200 00	..	77.577	36 State homes opened 71 District/reception centres started	Upto 1959
		..					

# APPENDIX I (Contd.)

2	Care Programmes (Ministry of Home Affairs)	..	80.00	..	59.694	..	7 Remand homes 5 Certified schools 1 Borstal school 3 Probation hostels 27 Probation officers 9 Beggar homes 8 Prison welfare officers 1 Children's home	Upto 1959
		..	..	..	..	..		
III State Programmes :								
1	Welfare extension projects (States' contribution)	..	250.00	..	240.40	..	..	
2	Social and moral hygiene and after care (States' contribution)	..	200.00	..	96.50	..	..	
3	Care programmes (States' contribution)	..	100.00	..	96.60	..	..	
4	States' social welfare programmes	..	150.00	..	121.30	..	19 Work centres/service homes for women 2 Orphanages/holiday homes 1 Home for physically handicapped 3 Youth hostels/sports centres 9 Training programmes	Upto 1959
Total		..	700.00	..	554.80	..	..	
Grand Total		400.00	1900.00	160.43	1566.671	..	..	

## CHAPTER

# 32

### *Organization and Administration of Social Work*

D. V. KULKARNI, M.A., DIP.S.S.A. (T.I.S.S.)

SOCIAL work like any other activity, whether Governmental or voluntary, has necessarily to take into account the problem of organization and administration. Without proper organizational pattern, it is impossible to avoid duplication and wastage of human and economic resources and it is not possible to get adequate returns of the resources utilised in the activity. In short, the structural aspect of the apparatus is of no mean importance.

The same considerations apply to proper administration. Until earnest consideration is given to proper administrative machinery, it is well-nigh impossible to achieve the objectives. Until the functioning of the organizational apparatus is proper, it is not possible to expect any tangible and appropriate results through the structure alone. It is, therefore, of utmost importance that even in the newly developed field of social work in India, a time has come when a serious thought needs to be given both to the organizational pattern and also to the functioning of the machinery, namely, the administration.

**Social Work—Past and Present.**—The traditions of social welfare like other civilized countries of the world have been deeply rooted in Indian heritage. Like other civilized countries, even in India religion has accorded an exalted place to social welfare which in its essence aims at rehabilitating persons deviated from the accepted social patterns and, therefore, in need of help.

The ancient religious literature has, therefore, extolled *dana* and in the medieval times a considerable volume of religious literature has developed around this concept.<sup>1</sup> There have been some efforts to classify *dana* speculations as to which kind of *dana* is the best. The Bhagavadgeeta makes the following mention:

दातव्य मिति यद्दानं दियते ऽ नुपकारिणे ।

देशे भावेच पात्रेच तद्दानं सात्त्विकं श्रुतम् ॥

The scriptures have enjoined certain specific duties in respect of a house-holder which could be summed up in the concept of the three debts,<sup>2</sup> namely,

- (i) Debts to the gods — Deva-Rnam
- (ii) Debts to the manes — Pitr-Rnam
- (iii) Debts to the sages — Rshi-Rnam

Unless a house-holder fulfils these obligations to the gods, the manes and the sages, he was not supposed to be eligible for salvation.

The daily conduct of a house-holder enjoined certain duties to the *atithi*. The daily conduct of the house-holder included the observance of the five sacrifices ( पञ्चमहायज्ञ )<sup>3</sup> and other obligations

१ दान धर्म निषेवेत नित्यम्

MANU, IV, 227.

२ Cf. जायमानो वै ब्राह्मणस्त्रिभिर्ऋणैर्ऋणवाञ्जायते ।

यज्ञेन देवेभ्यः प्रजया पितृभ्यः स्वाध्यायेन ऋषिभ्य इति

ऋणानि भीष्य पाकृत्य मनो मोक्षे निवेशयेत् ।

अनपाकृत्य मोक्ष तु सेवमानो ब्रजत्यधः ॥

MANU, VI 53.

३ अध्यापनं ब्रह्मयज्ञः पितृयज्ञस्तु तर्पणम् ।

होमो दैवो बलिर्भोतो नृत्यज्ञोऽतिथिपूजनम् ॥

MANU, III, 70.

to other living beings. All these concepts in the traditional Hindu thought clearly demonstrate how deeply the foundations of welfare are laid in the traditions. In fact, they were imperceptibly blended with religion and were construed to be part and parcel of human activity.

Taking into account other religions, one finds that even other main religious thoughts of the world have given the same place to charity, respect for handicapped living beings, and the duty to help them.

It is, however, an accepted fact that the concept of social welfare has necessarily been dynamic. Traditions have been changing from time to time, and accordingly, the orientation, objectives and methods of social welfare so ingrained in the religions and social traditions have also been changing.

First of all, the objectives of social welfare work in the past have mostly been individual. The object was to achieve individual results—may be in the form of achievement of merit (*punyam*) to the person or probably with a view to achieving the fruit in the other world. On the other hand, the modern social work is not essentially restricted to this objective. The approach to social welfare work in these days is more collective and aims at achieving the public good rather than individual merit.

Secondly, social welfare work in the past was merely emotional or sentimental. The persons who were moved by the miseries of their fellow beings were actuated towards alleviating their sufferings and miseries out of pity and compassion. The approach to social welfare work in the modern days, on the other hand, has been rational. The development of physical and social sciences which has been helpful to solve the riddles concerning the motivation of human behaviour to a great extent, has given a new “tool” to deal with the problems of social welfare. The human civilization is tending towards a homogeneity so far unknown to us. Distances have been minimised and the misery of one nation has become the concern of another. All these changes have tended to give a new approach to social welfare work. Our political apparatus in the background of the world scene has become more organized,

and our efforts to tackle the world problems through a world organization like the United Nations have given a completely different orientation to social welfare work.

More and more, we are heading towards a democratic pattern of living, and no longer do we need the goodwill of a benevolent dictator, to solve our social welfare problems. Phenomena like destitution, desertion, delinquency, crime and prostitution affecting individuals and public calamities like floods, cyclones and fires have become the concern of the State. In the modern days emphasis of responsibility in the field of social welfare work has been shifted from the individual to the State. The ideal of a welfare State aiming at the greatest good to the greatest number is gradually getting distinct. The individual motivation for charity is affected because of the new taxation policies in the welfare State. Now the States aim at the common initiative of the people at large for executing a welfare programme rather than the individual. Necessarily, therefore, different organizational patterns suitable to the genius of the countries concerned, to operate the welfare programmes have come into being.

**Impetus to Social Welfare in India.**—Even in India, all these changes which are visible in other civilized countries have been coming to the forefront, and newer organizational patterns to meet new needs are being developed. Especially, after independence a resurgent but silent movement in the field of social work has gained an added momentum. Although the footsteps of these changes were heard indistinctly even before the independence of the country, it was only after the actual formation of an Independent Democratic Republic that these changes were vivid and tangible.

Probably, the mass migrations at the time of the emergence of two nations of the Indian sub-continent gave a momentum to this process.

Following partition, the Government was faced with the stupendous task of having to resettle about 74 lakhs of refugees from Pakistan, of whom about 49 lakhs were from West Pakistan and the rest from East Pakistan. A Central Ministry of Rehabilitation was created for

the purpose of dealing with this problem. Some of the States also followed the lead by forming State Ministries of Rehabilitation. The remedial steps taken by the authorities differed according to whether the refugees were rural or urban.<sup>4</sup>

• It is after a period of about 13 years that the Ministry of Rehabilitation is winding up its activities after resettling these huge populations and getting them adjusted generally with the Indian masses.

• The expenditure involved in rehabilitation in the First Five-Year Plan period amounted to about 136 crores of rupees, of which about 67 crores were earmarked for housing, 22 crores for education and vocational training, 19 crores for rural loans and 13 crores for urban loans. The expenditure under the Second Five-Year Plan is estimated at about 80 crores, of which 25 crores are for housing. It is not an exaggeration to say that the government agencies have handled this problem efficiently and speedily, and it is a significant event in the field of social work in the post-independence era.<sup>5</sup>

The second landmark in the field of social work is the institution of Community Project Administration. The Government realized the necessity of extending welfare activities in the rural areas and with this appreciation, the Community Development Project Administration was ultimately converted into a Community Development Ministry. The work done in this direction also is of stupendous dimensions.

Since its inception eight years ago, the community development programme has been introduced in over 2,000 blocks and now serves a population of about 194 million. By the end of the second plan, the programme will extend to about 3,100 blocks comprising about 400,000 villages. Of these, over 1,000 blocks will have completed more than five years and entered the second stage of the community development programme and about 2,040 blocks will still be in the first stage. In addition, in about 500 development blocks, pre-extension activities will have been taken in hand. According to the programme already approved, by October, 1963 community development work will

<sup>4</sup>Clifford Manshardt, *First Decade—1947 to 1957*, New Delhi: United States Information Services, 1957, p. 171.

<sup>6</sup>Manshardt, *Ibid.*, P. 172.



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extend over the entire country. At the end of the Third Plan, about 2,100 blocks will be in their first stage, about 2,000 in the second stage and over 1,000 blocks will have completed 10 years of developmental activity. For programmes under community development and co-operation, the Plan provides a total outlay of Rs. 400 crores.<sup>6</sup>

The Government of India during the past few years have also given due attention to the field of voluntary social welfare organizations. The Central Social Welfare Board has established its reputation by demonstrating how in the national reconstruction, voluntary social welfare efforts could be harnessed. A vast network of social welfare extension projects has developed under the auspices of the Central Social Welfare Board. Thousands of voluntary social welfare organizations with the help from the Central Social Welfare Board have consolidated and expanded their programmes, and a huge number of voluntary social welfare workers have given their valuable time and energies to supplement the efforts of the State. The Central Social Welfare Board till the end of the year 1959-60 has a commendable record of achievements. The rural welfare extension projects working under the Central Social Welfare Board numbered 682 covering 38,000 villages with 4,000 centres. They have also established 78 urban welfare extension projects. In addition to this important work, grants-in-aid amounting to Rs. 3,27,16,600 have been distributed to 5,620 institutions from August, 1953 to March, 1960. There are 47 State homes and 88 district shelters and reception centres in addition to the other activities of the Central Social Welfare Board.<sup>7</sup>

Agencies like the Indian Council for Child Welfare, the Indian Conference of Social Work and the Bharat Sewak Samaj have sprung up and have rendered unique services in the cause of social work in the country.

New philosophies concerning social work have evolved. Eminent thinkers like Vinoba Bhave who have given new concepts of

<sup>6</sup>Government of India, Planning Commission, *Third Five-Year Plan—A Draft Outline*, New Delhi, June, 1960, p. 153.

<sup>7</sup>Government of India, Central Social Welfare Board. *List of Aided Institutions and Welfare Extension Projects*. Pt. 1. New Delhi: Navchetan Press, 1960.

social welfare work through their activities aiming at *sarvodaya*, which literally means an all-sided development, will have made a unique contribution to the field.

The Government have successfully completed their two Five-Year Plans, and the third plan aims at a target of Rs. 10,500 crores.

These nation-wide activities in the field of social welfare work would indicate the herculean efforts which are being made, and it would also indicate how the modern organizational patterns differ from the traditional.

**Social Services for Social Welfare.**—Naturally, with the organization of these vast programmes of social welfare, certain new concepts in the field have emerged. In line with the characteristics of a scientific age, a need has been felt to classify the field, and recently there is a trend to distinguish “social welfare” from “social services”. Services like education, housing, technical education, health have been more or less compartmentalised in the broad category of “social services”, while the services which are meant “for the under-privileged classes of the community” have found a place under the category of “Social welfare services”.

It is estimated that the process of classification will essentially be continued as thinking in the field gets more and more crystallised. For example, the Study Team appointed by the Planning Commission on Social Welfare and Welfare of the Backward Classes has made a further classification even under the field of social welfare because they think that

the executing machinery for social welfare and welfare of the backward classes should be kept separate.

22. This is necessary as the schemes for the welfare of backward classes that cover the entire sector of development are of a nature different from the social welfare schemes which have predominantly a welfare content.<sup>8</sup>

**Field of Social Administration.**—The trend of classification which has been touched in the above paragraphs necessarily leads us to another aspect of the discussion, and that is about the very nature of administration of social welfare activities. General admini-

<sup>8</sup>Committee on Plan Projects. *Report of the Study Team on Social Welfare of Backward Classes*, New Delhi: Government of India Press, I, 1, (July, 1959), p. 213.

nistration *per se* has been mostly construed as implementation of the policy irrespective of the human aspect. Giving effect to the rules and regulations prescribed has always been a characteristic of general administration. The flexibility needed in a field like social welfare with a preponderant human component has been predominantly absent as a pattern in the accepted administrative processes. However, there has been an increasing necessity to revise these contents of administration to suit the extending needs of newer fields like social welfare.

After all, any service launched by a governmental organization is primarily meant for the welfare of the masses and the masses consist of human beings. The problems of human beings cannot be compassed in a few rules and regulations. Indeed every human being is an entity by itself and mere rules and regulations cannot be made applicable to all the human problems. The utility of rules and regulations is primarily to serve as a guide, and they cannot be made applicable statically to all the human situations. Therefore, the field of social welfare administration, to put it concisely, social administration, is gaining a separate place as we are progressing further with the newer concepts of social welfare.

**Schools of Social Work.**—In other countries this need was realized long before. It was appreciated even in India. The first effort on an organized scale to demonstrate this need was made by starting the Sir Dorabji Tata Graduate School of Social Work in Bombay in 1936. The School, now the Tata Institute of Social Sciences offers a Diploma in Social Service Administration.

Recently the Schools of Public Administration as also the training programmes for administrative services have included some kind of training in social administration in their curricula.

This need for a specialized training can also be proved by the emergence of various other schools of social work. The Kashi Vidyapith established a school on a graduate level in the year 1946. The first School of Social Work affiliated to a University was established in 1948 when the Delhi School of Social Work came

into being. During recent years, other schools of social work have been established at Lucknow, Baroda, Madras, Agra, Udaipur, Waltair and Bangalore.

Apart from these schools of social work, some of the missionary organizations have also taken a lead in establishing short-term courses in social welfare. The Social Services League in Bombay has been organizing short-term training for social workers for the last so many years. In some of the cities efforts have been made to organize Co-ordinating Councils of Social Service organizations, and one of the activities of such Councils is to organize training courses for persons interested in social work. The Co-ordinated Council of Social Service in Poona, for example, has been organizing such courses periodically.

The training courses of Kasturba Trust are in great demand for training of *gram sevikas* and other similar types of social welfare workers. The Ministry of Community Development has also taken a lead in training their officers working on the operational level.

There are also some beginnings to find a place for social work training on an undergraduate level and a beginning has been made in Bombay, Mysore, and Bangalore to impart training at an undergraduate level.

Educational institutions like the Jammia Millia have also instituted certain courses with social welfare orientation. The Bharat Sewak Samaj has also been organizing seminars and training courses from time to time. The Indian Council for Child Welfare is contemplating organization of specialized training courses in Child Welfare.

It would thus be seen that the need for specialization in the field of social welfare which would equip a worker with a specialized knowledge of social welfare administration has been finally appreciated.

The Study Team on Social Welfare and Welfare of the Backward Classes have recommended:

In the existing context of welfare programmes, there are

three major categories of welfare personnel for the execution of institutional and non-institutional programmes in the urban and rural areas, namely,

- (a) Administrative and senior supervisory category at the headquarters for supervisory duties, research and planning, e.g., directors, research officers;  
In training institutions, e.g., instructors, field work supervisors;  
In large institutions, e.g., superintendents, medical psychiatric social workers, probation officers.
- (b) intermediate supervisory category in the urban areas, in medium and small sized institutions, e.g., superintendents, community organizers; and  
in rural areas for the direction and supervision of field staff in project centres, e.g., social education organizers, chief welfare organizers (*mukhya sevikas*).
- (c) field level workers in rural areas, e.g., *gram sevikas*; and  
in urban areas, e.g., welfare workers, recreation leaders and assistants in welfare institutions.<sup>9</sup>

This would indicate that for all the respective welfare positions, the need for training has been specially recognized in the current thinking on social welfare and a specialized training in the field of social welfare has become a primary requisite in the context of the modern social welfare programmes.

**Administrators Versus Specialists.**—With the emergence of specialization in social welfare, the old problem in the field of administration, namely, the administrators versus specialists also needs to be looked into. Specially, in a country like India where the contents of the field of social welfare are yet defused, this problem is bound to engage the attention for many years to come. Even in the United Kingdom, there has been a controversy about this particular aspect.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 249.

<sup>10</sup>E. N. Gladden, *The Civil Service—Its Problems and Future*, London: Staples Press, 1948, pp. 27-28.

These controversies are, however, insignificant. More the field gets crystallised, and the contents of social welfare are brought into clear focus, these controversies would fade away. Suffice it to say that an administrator can be a social worker, and a social worker can also prove to be an administrator by years of experience and training. No category either of the administrator or the specialist should claim a superiority over the other. It is only by accepting this position that both these categories can help each other and help together the common cause, namely, the alleviation of suffering of those who need help and guidance to adjust themselves properly as normal human beings.

The relationship between the specialists and the administrators has depended on the outlook of the individual administrators which has often produced a sense of frustration in the specialist. This frustration not only affected the value of the specialist but has also deterred good men from entering the service at all.<sup>11</sup>

The real solution to this problem always lies in proper understanding on the part of the specialist and the administrator and ultimately:

It is a matter of personalities rather than of organization. If the Administrative class are to have at all levels the last word, it must be tactfully and understandingly said. No administrator could (and few would) deny the importance of technical considerations; therefore no administrator who is any good should deny the expert his say. Conversely, no specialist who is any good should assume that his Administrative colleague is an ignorant bigot. Where the attitude is one of mutual understanding the public service benefits greatly.<sup>12</sup>

In this behalf the Study Team on Social Welfare and Welfare of the Backward Classes have recommended that

- (a) Welfare programmes at the planning, administrative, supervisory and field levels must be executed with the aid of trained personnel.
- (b) Union and State cadres for welfare personnel should be constituted.

<sup>11</sup>Monk Bosworth, *How the Civil Service Works*, London: Phoenix House, Ltd., 1952, p. 39.

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 42.

- (c) Recruitment to these cadres should be done through Public Service Commissions from among candidates with qualifications prescribed by the Advisory Board on Social Welfare.
- (d) As an interim measure, the senior posts may be filled by officers from the administrative services to the extent trained and experienced welfare workers are not available to take over these responsibilities.
- (e) Opportunities should be provided for workers to move to the higher levels on the basis of merit and experience.
- (f) In addition to direct recruitment to these cadres, opportunities should be given for the absorption of persons already on the job on the completion of prescribed training programmes.<sup>13</sup>

The discussion in the above paragraphs would go to indicate the necessity of evolving a separate type of functionary, if at all the services in a welfare state have got to be implemented properly.

Unfortunately, however, mainly because of the shortage of trained personnel and secondly, because the thinking in the field of social welfare is defused, the organizational pattern as obtained on the national, state and district levels needs much to be desired. In India we are still struggling to find our way through a period of transition.

The contents of social welfare have been defined differently in different states, and that is one of the reasons why along with the contents of social welfare which have been duly accepted as such all over, most of the subjects which have vitally no relation to social welfare have been linked to the Directorates of Social Welfare. In certain states, items like dramas, folk songs, *tamashas* and other activities of this type have been linked up to the Directorates of Social Welfare on the executive level. The reason for such an organizational pattern is not far to seek. In certain quarters, there is no clear cut thinking on the problem, and that is the only reason why we come across such organizational set ups. Owing to the

<sup>13</sup>Committee on Plan Projects, *op. cit.*, pp. 356-357.

faulty organizational patterns, various difficulties have arisen even in the functional areas. It has led to a loss of efficiency.

It is, therefore, time that we took stock of the whole situation and discarded the fallacy of new wine in old bottles.

• **Some Desirable Aspects.**—It is, therefore, necessary to modify the organizational patterns. First and foremost, it is absolutely necessary to bring about decentralisation in the administrative machinery. It is of no use to have an unwieldy organizational pattern with a large red-tape at least in the field of social welfare where one has to deal with human beings. Needless to say that human maladies with individual characteristics need efficient handling, and a centralised official set up based on traditional procedures devoid of any elasticity and flexibility is likely to be improper in the field of social administration.

The need for securing efficiency and speed in execution and widespread confidence in the integrity of the administration at all points affecting the general public have always been stressed as vital problems in economic development. With increase in the tempo of development activities and in the functions of Government these aspects of administrative reform have assumed even greater urgency.<sup>14</sup>

This observation applies *mutatis mutandis* to the field of social welfare also. Unless, therefore, adequate decentralisation by classifying the various types of social welfare activities, of course, keeping in view the economic and administrative exigencies, is brought into the organizational pattern concerning social welfare, we cannot hope for much success.

Secondly, the mechanism of social welfare services is a matter of urgent consideration. Even in many of the advanced countries there is a trend of giving an immense amount of thought to the organizational patterns of social welfare, and we cannot remain an exception to this in India. Only by a proper organizational pattern it will be possible to achieve necessary efficiency and avoid wastage.

There is another additional reason why mechanism of the organizational pattern in social welfare would necessarily differ

<sup>14</sup>Third Five Year Plan, *op. cit.*, p. 58.



from the traditional one. In the field of social welfare in any democracy worth the name with an ideal of a welfare state at its heart, participation by the citizens in the governmental activities is an established fact, and, therefore, it automatically follows that a newer organizational pattern based on the felt needs of the people is an essential prerequisite.

Unless the structure, therefore, is perfected to meet the newer needs we cannot but waste our human and economic resources.

Next it is necessary to develop this new field with the help of specialized knowledge. When every department of human activity has become highly specialized, it is impossible to consider the old organizational pattern as effective in a new field like social work.

Without the co-operation of voluntary welfare organizations the governmental efforts are not likely to go very far.

The Study Team, therefore, recommends (i) A Central Advisory Board for Harijan Welfare; (ii) A Harijan Welfare Board for tribal welfare at state level, and (iii) district level committees.

These boards are supposed to advise the governmental work with a view to bringing about voluntary participation in governmental activities which, as stated above, is a characteristic of modern social welfare administration.

A review of the current thought about participation of voluntary welfare workers and organizations in the governmental social welfare programmes will show a number of interesting developments. Though it has been an admitted pattern that in the field of social welfare there ought to be a growing participation of the voluntary welfare organizations, their precise role has not yet emerged.

There are a number of views expressed in this behalf. Some divergent views demand a complete control of the social welfare work by the voluntary welfare organizations. The sponsors of this view maintain that the voluntary social welfare workers or organizations should not be mere advisory functionaries but they should have actual control of the programmes in the field of social welfare. According to them, the governmental agency should rest con-

tent with the allotment of funds, and if necessary they should have some inspectorial functions only.

On the other hand, there are people who think that the voluntary social welfare workers and organizations are getting more and more dependent on governmental funds, and this process is going to mar the initiative of the voluntary sector. They believe that the efforts of the voluntary social welfare workers which are supposed to be complementary to the activities of the state are bound to diminish if the entire resources are supplied by the state, thus making the social welfare workers and organizations merely functioning as administrators of public funds.

The growth of social work abroad as well as in India shows the initiative taken by the voluntary social welfare workers in starting a number of useful services, and when their value was demonstrated, eventually these services were taken over by the state. This developmental process, however, is tending to assume a different pattern in India as large scale funds are made available to voluntary social welfare organizations. Occasionally, we hear that programmes of agencies like the Central Social Welfare Board have curbed the growth of voluntary initiative, and a large number of organizations have come up and managed to get the funds needed without any effort on their part.

Excluding these two extreme views, it is considered that a middle path can be found, and both the state and the voluntary sector can work harmoniously together. In fact, it is the pattern which has been envisaged by the Central Social Welfare Board when the principle of matching contributions was accepted by them. In a democratic country pledged to the ideal of a welfare state, there cannot be any gulf, as is apparent in the field of social welfare, between the state responsibilities and the voluntary sector. These two views will have to be harmonised eventually.

Perhaps, it is a matter of public education. If the people in general appreciate the care to be exercised in respect of public funds, they would certainly accept the principle that the State may help the voluntary effort to the maximum so that the advantages of voluntary social welfare work mentioned before can be accrued;

and, at the same time, the voluntary sector should also accept the need for safeguarding public funds by encouraging inspections and audits from the State.

It is also necessary that the recruitment of the welfare personnel even in the voluntary organizations should be streamlined properly. Probably, in this area there is a great need for reconciliation or co-operation between the State and the voluntary sector. The state may lay down the recruitment rules in respect of the personnel prescribing necessary qualifications about training and experience. If necessary, the State may employ trained and qualified personnel themselves and depute them to the agencies which are helped by the State.

It is absolutely necessary, at the same time, that there ought to be a minimum provision for the security of service conditions of the welfare personnel employed in voluntary welfare organizations. Owing to the lack of security it is observed that a great many workers are always unsteady and use their employment in voluntary organizations as a stepping stone.

There should also be a proper inspectorial provision, coupled with adequate field counselling facilities, and this aspect may necessarily be taken up in greater detail by the state because in a voluntary welfare set up there is a crying need for such a guidance. This need is bound to be there at least for some years to come till management of most of the voluntary welfare organizations is properly trained and orientated towards the objectives of the welfare programmes.

**Patterns of Organization.**—On this background, if we try to analyse the organizational patterns in different states in the country, we cannot but say:

The over-all staff position of welfare departments of the State Governments can only be described as obscure. In some States, welfare activities are distributed over a wide range of welfare departments. Madras is a case in point with specific welfare programmes administered by the departments of Rural Development Projects, Harijan Welfare, Women's Welfare, Certified Schools and Vigilance Service, Probation, Home, Education, Public Health and the State Social Welfare Board. In some other States, an attempt has been made to

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integrate various welfare activities under one welfare department. But even here the content of programmes is not uniform and varies with the special problems of the State and the particular stage reached in the development of welfare administration.<sup>15</sup>

It is true, however, that as we develop, the field of social welfare which has obscured and confused patterns varying from state to state would gradually clear up and a uniform pattern would emerge. The Study Team on Social Welfare and Welfare of the Backward Classes referred to above has given a lead in this behalf and recommended after a careful thought that:

- (a) Social Welfare subjects (excluding the welfare of backward classes) should be brought under one administrative agency at the centre. A separate department may be set up immediately for the purpose under the Ministry of Education which may be appropriately redesignated as "Ministry of Education and Social Welfare".
- (b) The department for the welfare of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and other backward classes may be set up under the Ministry of Home Affairs.<sup>16</sup>

As regards the States, they have recommended:

A unified Welfare Department in each State dealing with social welfare as also the Welfare of Backward Classes should be set up. The executing machinery for social welfare and welfare of backward classes should be kept separate.<sup>17</sup>

At the district level, they have recommended:

- (a) The collector should be in overall charge of supervision and co-ordination of all welfare schemes in the district. Funds should be transferred from the Welfare Department to the Collector in respect of all schemes with the exception of those mentioned in (c) below, for the implementation of schemes.
- (b) Apart from such schemes as the Welfare Department may frame, the District Level Committee may be encouraged to originate schemes based on local needs.
- (c) In respect of supra-district schemes, moneys may be transferred direct to the implementing departments.
- (d) (i) In respect of schemes in (b) above, execution will proceed directly under the supervision of the Collector.

<sup>15</sup>Committee on Planned Projects, *op. cit.*, p. 252.

<sup>16</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 346.

<sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 346.

- (ii) In respect of schemes under (c) above, the execution will be through the implementing departments. These arrangements will have to be incorporated in standing orders in accordance with which the local officer of implementing departments will automatically act under the Collector's instructions<sup>18</sup>

The Study Team referred to above envisages that policy matters like social welfare, legislation, recruitment of welfare personnel, co-ordination with sister departments of the government should be entrusted to and handled at the departmental level, while the execution of the programmes should be entrusted to separate directorates. The consensus of opinion expressed by the Study Team is to have separate directorates or executive wings for the welfare of Backward Classes and for other social welfare programmes.

Needless to say that in bigger states, if at all any efficiency is desired, there is a clear need to have separate directorates as indicated above.

This pattern is also noticeable in some of the western countries. For example in the Home Office in the United Kingdom:

Excluding the work of the professional, technical and inspecting staff, the work of the department is organized in different main groups as follows:—(a) Naturalization, nationality, and aliens; (b) children's and probation work; (c) criminal; (d) police; (e) fire services; (f) civil defence; (g) general.<sup>19</sup>

This would show that the work regarding specific fields of welfare has been organized at the departmental level in a separate unit responsible to the administrative department with due decentralization at the executive level.

In conclusion, it must be stated that the organizational pattern or the structure of social welfare and also the functional aspect, Administration of Social Welfare Services, is still in its formative stage in India.

The functional aspect, namely, Social Administration has received a considerable thought and a variety of facilities for the training of personnel have developed and the need for training has more or less become an accepted prerequisite. But the corollary

<sup>18</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 219.

<sup>19</sup>Monk Bosworth, *op. cit.*, p. 179.

that there is a need to modify our apparatus, namely, the organizational pattern has received scant attention. The day is not very far, however, when both the structural and functional aspects, namely, the organization and the administrative aspect of social welfare would be complementary to each other. Before long, need for specialized personnel, complementary to the administrators would be accepted by all hands. Not only that but persons well trained and experienced in social work would be assuming more and more important roles. Composite departments at the state level engaged in policy making and directorates of social welfare and the welfare of the backward classes at the executive level will be formed in all the states.

District level and the village level work will also be organized under enlightened district officials who will be helped in their functions of co-ordinating and executing the various welfare schemes in their own districts by specialized personnel. There would be proper decentralization which would avoid wastage of human and economic resources, and last but not the least, an enlightened administrative service:

which we are visualising, would not, therefore, be worked by a select company of Samurai directing a vast band of robots. It would constitute a professional service open to all the talents, contributing to the new life not by the offer of an 'open sesame' in the form of a simple specific for all human ills but by proffering a way of advance by hard thinking, strenuous labour and great example. From the junior clerk or typist to the director-administrator each civil servant would be a personality, taking part in a vast enterprise of community service.<sup>20</sup>

It is hoped that these observations would apply to our future social administrators in the field of social welfare wherein we have been applying the techniques of modern social work more and more.

After all, the ultimate objective of the organizational structure and the functioning of the machine, is the alleviation of human suffering. It is true that there have been and are bound to be changes and modifications in both the areas, namely, organization and administration of social welfare services which we should gladly

<sup>20</sup>Gladden, *op. cit.*, p. 164.

accept. Human life itself is a continuous dynamic process and ultimate happiness of mankind has been the quest of all human activities from times immemorial. Though there have been continuous changes and modifications throughout the span of human existence with a view to evolving better methods of organizing and administering the "tools" to work out a better human existence; yet the objective, the ultimate happiness of mankind, remained unchanged.

The cardinal motto has always been the alleviation of human suffering as embodied in our ancient ideal—

कामये दुःखतप्तानां भूतानामर्तिनारामम् ॥

## CHAPTER

# 33

### *Social Work Research and Statistics*

P. RAMACHANDRAN, M.A.,DIP.S.S.A.(T.I.S.S.)

SOCIAL work research is an objective and systematic inquiry into the problems in the field of social work. "The study of concepts underlying social work skills is one of the major tasks of social work research. It involves the study of the relationship of social workers with their individual clients, groups or communities on various levels of interaction or therapy as well as their mutual relationships and functioning within the organizational structure of social agencies."<sup>1</sup> Social work research, therefore, concerns itself with the problems faced by social work practitioners. It "encompasses these questions which are encountered in social work practice or in planning or administering social work services which are soluble through research, and which are appropriate for investigation under social work auspices."<sup>2</sup>

How does social work research then differ from social research? Social research aims at the advancement of different social sciences. Its function is to collect facts and test theories from an academic viewpoint. Thus, while social research is generic in its approach and primarily interested in mankind, social work research is more problem-oriented, specific in its approach and it focusses attention on man and his immediate problems. Moreover, while the findings of social research tend to contribute towards the

<sup>1</sup>Hilde Landenberger Hochwald, "The Function of Social Work Research." *Social Casework*, Volume XXXIV, No. 1 (1953), p. 31.

<sup>2</sup>Reprinted with permission of the National Association of Social Workers, from *Social Work Year Book* 1957, p. 489.



development of theories, laws and, therefore, aims at generalisations, the results of social work research are utilised to guide the professional social worker in rendering social service to individuals, groups and communities.

This does not imply that there is nothing in common between the two. Social work research utilises the same scientific method; similar research designs and techniques as does social research. No doubt, when some procedures of social research are not suitable to social work research, it would be necessary to develop the tools which would be appropriate to social work research.

The next question that would need consideration is; what is the role of social work research in social work? or in other words, what is the content of social work research?

The areas of social work research may be broadly classified as follows:<sup>4</sup> (1) studies to establish, identify and measure the need for service; (2) studies to measure the services offered as they relate to needs (3) studies to test, gauge and evaluate results of social work operation; (4) studies to test the efficacy of specific techniques of offering services; and (5) studies in methodology of social work research.

There is also a sixth function of social work research, namely prediction.

1. Social work to be successful has to be carried out among individuals, groups and communities which need the services of social workers and social agencies. Thus, to start social work, it is important that the social work practitioner, first and foremost, establishes that there is a need for service. Where such need exists, the next step would be to identify the specific needs of those concerned. This is important because any attempt on the part of the social worker to decide without asking those concerned what their needs will be may result in the misuse of resources, and, after all, social work is not worker-oriented but client-oriented. Hence social work research will prove an appropriate tool to find out what the problems in a given community which need to be

<sup>4</sup>Klein and Merian—*The Contribution of Research to Social Work*, New York: American Association of Social Work, 1948.

tackled are and what the kind of people who need them are. A corollary to this identification of the needs for service is the measurement of the need, i.e., how many are in need of each type of service? Such an initial research study would, therefore, serve two purposes; (a) enumeration of the existing problems and related needs; and (b) determining priority of services, which may be classified as (1) assessing the need for health and welfare services in a community; (2) need for services to children of working mothers; (3) measuring youth service needs, leisure time needs of different groups; and (4) needs for additional welfare services.

2. Once the needs are established and measured, the next step is to find out the existing services already available in the community, i.e., it is necessary to know the number of agencies functioning in a particular community, what services each one of them is rendering to the people, and the extent to which they are meeting the needs of the people, one should also know if there is any overlapping of services.

Thus, areas one and two above together should provide answers to the following questions: (a) do needs exist? (b) what are the needs? (c) what are the resources available? (d) what is the gap between need and resources? and (e) how can the gap be filled in?

The third main function of social work research is fundamental to social work. The results of studies indicated in 3, 4 and 5 go to develop the discipline of social work.

3. The fundamental interest in undertaking evaluation studies is to assess the results of the social worker and the agency.

The aim of evaluation research in social work is to find out (a) whether the programmes are progressing in accordance with the objectives; and (b) whether the benefits really accrue to the people for whom they are meant? Answers to these questions not only enable the professional worker to find out how efficient the existing services are, but also provide the guide for future work which would prove more effective.

Examples of evaluation can be given as follows: (i) the effectiveness of the administrative organization and procedures;

(ii) the staff functioning; (iii) effectiveness of leadership; and (iv) evaluation of programme content.

4 and 5. The function of research in these areas is to contribute towards the building up of philosophy and theory content and methods of social work practice. It also aims to clarify the existing principles and concepts involved in social work. In the achievement of this objective, social work research focusses attention on the applicability of concepts and methods of various social sciences in the practice of social work. It also concerns itself with the study of the concepts and methods involved in social work studies and processes. A prerequisite of basic research is the need to have a thorough understanding of the aims, objectives and processes implied in social work.

The following is a list of some major problems which may be studied under this heading: (a) to test the validity and utility of concepts borrowed from other social sciences and applied to social work; (b) to test the various principles in which the component social work practice, i.e., case work, group work, community organizations, etc., are based e.g., to find out what the changes are that social workers are trying to bring about in the individual client, the group or the community through case work, group work and community organization processes; (c) the testing of assumptions of casual factors in social problems which form the basis of treatment in social work; e.g., parent-child relationship, environmental influence and delinquency, family situation and factors in developing personality, etc.; (d) the testing and development of appropriate research techniques for the better functioning of social work research; e.g., testing the utility of different designs and techniques; developing appropriate experimental designs; preparing criteria for evaluation of social work practice; preparing appropriate measuring scales; evaluating the utility of various sources of secondary data like case records, social statistics and suggesting improved methods of maintaining these.

6. The function of prediction in social work is to indicate as accurately as possible what the future needs of a community will be. It would be necessary, for example, to know something

about the future needs of schools, hospitals, social work personnel, etc., so that the necessary planning and development can be undertaken at the present time to meet the future needs. This does not, however, form a very important aspect of social work research at present.

7. The social work yearbook says: "The primary need for statistics in social work is for simple but comparable data for each field concerning the number of persons served, their significant characteristics, and the cost of service in terms of money and persons employed."<sup>4</sup>

Social work statistics, therefore, provides the basis for social work planning. Social work statistics, to prove useful in this role, has to be presented in a standardised form and calls for the maintenance of records and regular publication of reports by all agencies doing social work.

Unfortunately, there seems to be little evidence of any social work research studies undertaken in the country. The reasons for this lag are mainly: inadequate appreciation of the role of social work research; prejudice against any kind of investigation into the working of an agency, absence of trained research workers; plea that professional social work is still in its infancy; lack of funds.

For research in social work to gain its rightful place, it is necessary that three conditions be fulfilled, namely, (a) knowledge of social work and related sciences. Research in the field of social work can be undertaken by only those who have a thorough knowledge of social work as well as a general knowledge of other social sciences. The need for a knowledge of social sciences arises because in the first place social work principles are based on the different social sciences. Hence this latter knowledge enables one to understand a problem better as well as to adopt the methodological procedures of these other social sciences. (b) Knowledge of research methodology, particularly, those which are most appro-

<sup>4</sup>*Social Work Year Book 1929*, New York: National Association of Social Workers, quoted in proceedings of the National Conference of Social Work, Minneapolis, 1931, pp. 407-408.

priate to social work research. (c) It is also important that social work research be accepted as an important and integral part of social work practice. So long as social agencies do not realize this, so long as schools of social work do not give it its rightful place in the institution through the undertaking of basic research in social work, and until such time as national agencies do not stress its importance in planning for social development, social work research will continue to lag behind.

Responsibility for the development and effective utilisation of social work research rests with the following agencies; (i) Schools of social work; (ii) social work agencies; (iii) Government agencies; and (iv) National Councils of Social Work.

(i) **Schools of Social Work.**—Schools of social work have three major functions to perform in the area of social work research; (a) undertake basic research in social work; (b) provide the requisite expert guidance to social work agencies in their research work; and (c) train social work research personnel.

(a) It is the foremost function of schools of social work to provide the theory and knowledge which goes towards the building up of a science. For this purpose assumptions, concepts, hypothesis and theories borrowed from other disciplines have to be tested and evaluated. It is only by such basic research that contributions to basic theoretical and practical social work can be made. "The task is all the more gigantic in India, because our present social work knowledge is imbibed to a great degree from Western oriented text-books, which are again based on western culture, ways of life and mode of social behaviour. It, therefore, becomes imperative that we evolve through scientific studies of our experiences in the field, techniques and methods of social work more adaptable and suitable to Indian needs. Thus, on the basis of such valuable studies it would be possible to build up a fund of knowledge which would form the core and foundation of teaching material to the Indian students of social work."<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup>P. Ramachandran, "Research and Schools of Social Work", *Social Work Review*, July 1959, pp. 11-12.

Thus, it lies with the teachers of schools of social work to provide leadership in this respect.

(b) The second function of schools of social work is to provide the necessary expert research advice and professional service to social work agencies in their research work. While the role of these agencies will be discussed later, it may be mentioned here that by virtue of the fact that schools have no interests at stake and would, therefore, be expected to be objective, they are best suited to help agencies in this kind of work.

(c) The third important function of the schools is to train social work research personnel and provide training in research methods to the professional social workers. Most of the schools in India do provide training in research methods, first through a basic course on research and statistics and, secondly, through the insistence that students should undertake independent research projects in partial fulfilment of their postgraduate diploma course. But much is left to be desired. As far as the basic course goes, the students are only introduced to the theory of research methods and not provided with any opportunity to participate in class research project where they are enabled to plan and carry out small group studies. It is found that the individual projects do not, truly speaking, provide much of that learning experience as it is aimed to be. This is because, first, the students have a limited time at their disposal for doing a really good study. Secondly, most studies lack pre-planning in terms of time allocation to each phase of the study. This is mainly because students tend to undertake studies which are too large to be completed by a single individual within the allotted time. Furthermore, more often than not they lose interest in a project which is not entirely of their choice.

The situation about the training of research personnel is much more serious. With the exception of the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, no other school has any programme for training research personnel. Further, we have the paradox of continuous demand for trained research personnel with lack of adequate employment opportunities for those who are already trained. It need hardly be added that when leaders in social work advocate the need for

social work research, they should at the same time call upon social work agencies to employ research personnel in their agencies.

(ii) Social work agencies are the actual practitioners of social work and, therefore, are best suited to undertake applied social work research programmes within their settings. Of particular interest to these agencies would be problems relating to the needs of the people, evaluation of the agency functions, evaluation of programmes, and finally, planning through research for the better utilisation of resources, financial and personnel as well as programming for future expansion, i.e., prediction research.

For the fulfilment of these functions social work agencies should have research sections in the organization, where independent sections cannot be set up, it would be worthwhile to have at least a research person on the staff of the agency. Where larger, and more complex studies are to be undertaken, it may be possible, as stated earlier, to obtain the services of expert research workers. Such co-operation between the agency and specialist researchers, the latter usually to be drawn from among schools of social work, would go a long way to a better application of technical knowledge.

What then is the present situation in India? By and large, very few agencies have either undertaken social work research so far, or have given thought to it. For one thing, they have not realized its utility. Then, again, even the professional social workers working in these agencies have not taken the initiative in the matter. But the most obvious reason is that agencies fight shy of being evaluated. The remedy for this situation lies in educating the agencies on the importance of implementing the process of social work.

(iii) With the development of a welfare state concept, government agencies in the country have an important role to play. They have three functions to perform. In the first place, Government is in a position to initiate studies on a national level. Secondly, it is one of the prime sources of funds for research. Thirdly, the government machinery can be best utilised for the collection of social statistics to develop a statistical system to integrate the

work of the large number of social agencies in the country. It need hardly be stated that, at present, there is little of social statistics available in the country. Those which are available are not very reliable. Hence there is a need to increase quantitatively social statistics and improve them qualitatively.

It is, therefore, encouraging to note that the Research Programmes Committee of the Planning Commission has a Social Welfare wing which provides research institutions and academic organizations with funds for undertaking research studies in the field of Social Welfare. For example, the studies so far carried out under its auspices include surveys on the beggar problem, prostitution, cultural change in rural areas, social and economic conditions of ex-criminal tribes, etc.

The Programme Evaluation Organization is also responsible for the evaluation of community development projects and national extension services. It has so far undertaken a number of benchmark surveys, acceptance of practices surveys, evaluation studies of community projects, etc.

A third Governmental agency, the Central Statistical Organization has been established to undertake the work of organization and collection of official statistics. It is hoped that it would go further in this matter by organizing the uniform recording and reporting of social work statistics by a large number of social work agencies in the country.

(iv) The role of a national council of social work in the country in co-ordinating the work of different social work agencies, schools of social work, and other institutions cannot go unmentioned. Such co-ordination would have to take the form of: (a) acting as a central clearing house for the collection and distribution of information on social work research and social work statistics, being done in the country; (b) advise different agencies on their research programmes as well as suggest appropriate problems for research; (c) disburse adequate funds for the undertaking of research work; (d) undertake of its own accord nationwide research studies which cannot normally be undertaken by a single research institution.



Though in India there exists an association, 'The Indian Conference of social Work,' it has yet to take over these functions. It must be added that the agency is not to be blamed for this delay, for the present intellectual trend of thought in India is on the practice of social work, and the process of social work, rather than on the development of research and the testing, gauging and evaluation of these processes and their hypothetical values.

The following suggestions are made with the hope that they will contribute towards the building up of research in social work in India.

1.(a) It is necessary to have Social Work Research Department in each school of social work to undertake research in social work independently and under the auspices of the Research Programmes Committee, Planning Commission, Government of India.

(b) Steps should be taken to encourage students in schools of social work to participate in small research facilities during the first year of their training to enable them to gain experience in this area. Further, they should be encouraged to select their own problems for their individual projects. At the same time, they should plan all phases of their research studies, and be required to adhere strictly to time schedules.

(c) The schools should encourage the publication of brief or full student research reports. This should go a long way to provide the incentive to students to take greater interest in their work.

2. It is essential that a Council of Social Work Research be set up in the country to perform the following functions:

- (a) to undertake periodic surveys to obtain information in social work research studies being undertaken by different institutions, etc.;
- (b) to co-ordinate research work of different schools of social work, research institutions, social services agencies, etc.;
- (c) to advise and encourage further fundamental and applied research by suggesting appropriate problems for research;
- (d) to provide facilities for the training of research workers;

- (e) to collect social work statistics and make it available to different member agencies and research workers;
- (f) to initiate evaluation research;
- (g) to undertake the building up of literature in the field of social work research, as well as arrange for the publication of research reports and appropriate text books;
- (h) to organize annual seminars on social work research, take stock of the progress made to date, and chalk out future research programmes; and
- (i) to provide for the meeting and exchange of views on social work research between foreign specialists and Indian research scholars at all levels.



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